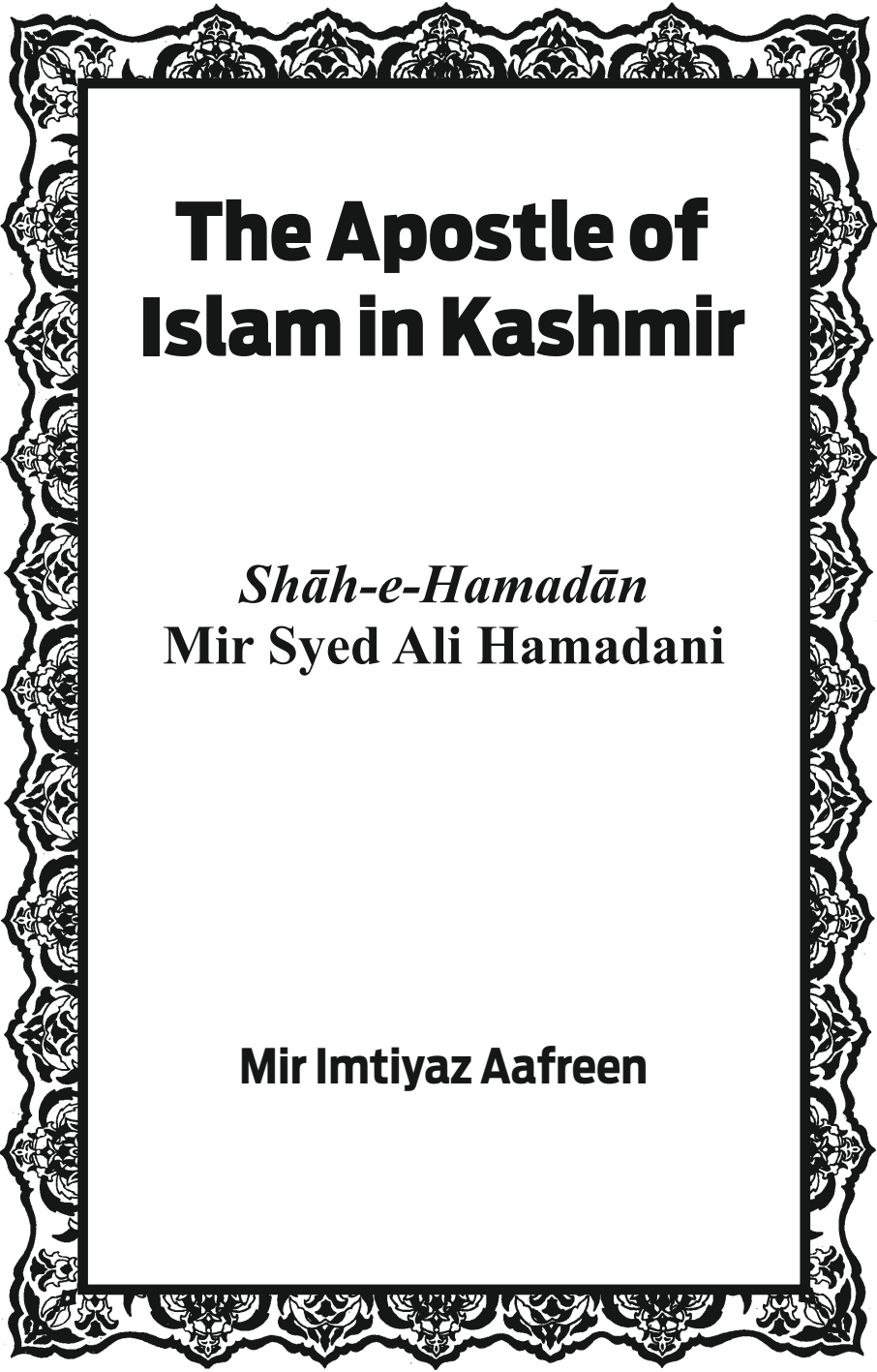




The Apostle of Islam in Kashmir

Shāh-e-Hamadān
Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen



The Apostle of Islam in Kashmir:

Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
*In the Name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Dedication

- To the mystical troika- Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, Lalla Ded and Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (May God be pleased with them.)
- To the Kashmiri youth who are conscious of their cultural roots
- To my spouse Shafiya and children Eshal, Omaira & Muhammad Hamadan – the coolness of my eyes

*“Ö Lord! Grant us comfort in our spouses and our offspring,
and make us a leading model for the God-conscious.”*

Al Quran (25:74)

CONTENTS

S. No.	Topic	Author	Pg. No.
01	Introduction	Prof. Mufti Mudasir	07
02	Foreword	Prof. G.N. Khaki	10
03	Preface	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	15
04	Who is Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani?		27
05	Words of Appreciation by some Luminaries		28
06	A Historical Outline		36
07	Abridged Biography of Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani		39
08	The Legacy of Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	104
09	Mir Syed Ali Hamadani: The Harbinger of Islamic Revolution in Kashmir	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	123
10	Contemporary Relevance of Shāh-e-Hamadān	Prof. GR Malik	133
11	Mir Syed Ali Hamadani and his Contribution to Islam in Kashmir	Prof Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi	143
12	The Lasting Impact of Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadāni on Kashmir	Dr Mohd Iqbal Rather	185
13	The Alleged Forced Conversions and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	219



14	Shāh-e-Hamadān and the Menace of Sectarianism	Prof. Hameeda Bano	244
15	The Religious Creed of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Dr Abdul Qudus Khan	255
16	Shāh-e-Hamadān: A Key Revivalist of Economy in Kashmir during Medieval Times	Juneefa Bilal	273
17	The Sufi Alchemy of Travel and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	293
18	The Sufi Alchemy of Love and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	310
19	Mir Syed Ali Hamadani's Arrival and Institutionalization of Sufism in Kashmir	Dr S Iqbal Quraishi	322
20	Revisiting Mir Syed Ali Hamadani: Some Considerations	Dr Mohammad Maroof Shah	335
21	Some Misconceptions and Delusions Regarding Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Yaqub Muhammad Barahvi	359
22	The Role of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani in Shaping the Islamic Identity in Kashmir	Muhammad Shafi Bhat	378
23	Ethical Philosophy of Politics: A Study of Imām Al- Ghazālī and Mir Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī	Dr Mohd Iqbal Rather	399
24	The Political Perspective of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	432



25	Shāh-e-Hamadān and Good Governance	Dr Muhammad Tanveer Hayat	446
26	Chihi Asrar: A Critical Evaluation	Prof G R Malik	464
27	Lalla Ded and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	481
28	Evaluating the Theological Aspect of Awrad-i-Fathiyyah	Dr Sartaj Ahmad Sofi	490
29	Tawhid (Divine Oneness) in Awrad-i-Fathiyya	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	503
30	The Human Intellect from Sufi Perspective: In the Light of Shāh-e-Hamadān's 'Risala Al-Aqliyyah'	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	524
31	The Creed of Spiritual Manhood (Futuwwah) and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	534
32	The Educational Perspective of Shāh-e-Hamadān	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	544
33	The Historical and Cultural Importance of Khanqah-i-Mualla	Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen	557
34	Towards Rediscovering Shāh-e-Hamadān	Dr M Irfan Shah	566



Introduction

Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani (1314-1385), popularly known as Shah Hamadan, is undoubtedly one of the greatest Sufi saints and missionaries of Islam of the medieval period whose multi-faceted genius has left a lasting impact on the socio-religious landscape of Iran, Central Asia and especially the Indian subcontinent. As a Sufi master of the Kubrawi order, a prolific writer of Sufi treatises, a recognised authority on Islamic sciences, a traveller who established connections with rulers and other Sufi masters, and above all, a highly successful reformer and missionary of Islam, Shah-e Hamadan's legacy continues to be a source of inspiration for many modern Muslims. Although revered across nations as a great Sufi saint, Kashmir has a distinction of remembering him in several unique ways, one of them being the epithet *baaniyi-e musalmaani dar Kashmir* 'the founder of the Islamic faith in Kashmir' because of his historical role in the Islamisation of Kashmir.



Another living testimony to his legacy in Kashmir is a mosque built in Srinagar in his honour in the late 14th century known as Khaanqaah-e Mualla which for the past six centuries has been a very important spiritual-religious centre of Kashmiri Muslims.

Shah-e Hamadan was not a recluse but an ardent missionary carrying the message of Islam across a vast territory and instructing people in the matters of faith. His correspondence with the contemporary rulers and in particular his Zakheeratul Mulook, an ethico-political treatise advising the kings in matters of governance, show him to be a highly perceptive, humane and God-conscious man of his times. As a fearless critic of moral degeneracy, political opportunism, and unjust social, economic and political systems, Shah-e Hamadan's teachings, unlike some other Sufi masters who restricted themselves to spiritual matters alone, are comprehensive and as relevant today as they were six hundred years ago. Although his principal contribution lies in putting Islam on a firm footing in Kashmir, his introduction of several crafts into the land provided a great boost to its economy and offered its inhabitants a dependable means of earning their livelihood. In the words of the poet Iqbal, he founded Iran-e Sagheer 'minor Iran' by bestowing on Kashmiris the gift of a new faith and providing its artisans the knowledge of new arts and crafts.



The present volume *The Apostle of Islam in Kashmir: Shah-e-Hamadan Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani* edited by Mir Imtiyaz Afreen is a valuable contribution to an already rich corpus of literature on Shah Hamadan. It brings together several contributions from scholars of repute on various facets of Shah Hamadan and his legacy. The book offers some new insights into Shah Hamadan's contribution in diverse fields ranging from Sufism to economics and will certainly be of great interest to all students of Kashmir history. I congratulate the editor on this feat and wish the book a great success.

Prof. Mufti Mudasir

Department of English

University of Kashmir



Foreword

In every age, certain seminal figures rise above the tides of time and geography. They shape not only the academic discourse and religious landscape but also influence the cultural, spiritual, intellectual, and social identities. Shāh-i-Hamadān, Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, a distinguished scholar of the highest stature, is undoubtedly one such sage with sound knowledge, vision, worldview and value system. His exemplary legacy spans the realms of faith, reform, scholarship, and civilisation and continues to illuminate the hearts and minds of the Kashmiri populace and beyond, centuries after his earthly departure.

The edited volume on Shāh-i-Hamadān is a significant compilation edited by Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen. This volume does more than merely present a biography of a spiritual luminary. It weaves together a tapestry of intellectual engagement and historical inquiry and



consolidates the significant contribution of a wide spectrum of scholars and researchers, both past and present. It gives voice to the soul of Kashmir by narrating the story of the man who not only transformed it into a land of learning, piety, and spiritual awakening but also introduced arts and crafts as well. Shāh-ī-Hamadān was not only a missionary of Islam but also a polymath, a statesman of ethics, and a visionary reformer. The pages of this book document his remarkable journey—from the city of Hamadān to the valley of Kashmir, from rigorous scholarship to transformative social reform, from crafting the Aurād-i-Fathiyyah to architecting a civilisational ethos that combined spirituality with craftsmanship, devotion with governance, and Divine unity (Tawḥīd) with cultural plurality. Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī's impact and influence extended beyond spiritual teachings; he was instrumental in introducing and nurturing various arts and crafts in Kashmir. Accompanied by a retinue of artisans from Central Asia, he played a pivotal role in establishing industries such as shawl weaving, carpet making, and papier-mâché. These crafts not only provided economic sustenance to the local population but also enriched the cultural tapestry of the region, leaving an indelible mark that persists to this day. Moreover, his emphasis on education and intellectual growth led to the establishment of



numerous Khānqahs, which served as centres of learning and spiritual development. These institutions became the hub of knowledge and learning, fostering community cohesion and promoting ethical values. Through these efforts, Shāh-ī-Hamadān laid the foundation for a society that valued both spiritual depth and worldly wisdom, a legacy that continues to inspire and guide generations.

This book is especially timely. In an era marked by both spiritual longing and existential fragmentation, the teachings and values that Shāh-ī-Hamadān stood for—compassion, sincerity, intellectual humility, justice, and inner purification—resonate with renewed urgency. In the preface of the book under reference, the editor explicitly states, and rightly so, that the true essence of Taṣawwuf has, in many cases, been eclipsed by hollow ritualism or dismissed through misinformed criticism. This work, to a greater extent, seeks to restore balance, to approach Shāh-ī-Hamadān not as a miracle worker ensnared in folklore but as a reformer whose grounded spirituality and inclusive wisdom offer an enduring blueprint for individual and societal upliftment and transformation.

The variety of contributions in this book—from renowned academics like Prof. G.R. Malik, Dr Hameeda



Nayeem, Dr Maroof Shah, and Dr Sartaj Ahmad Sofi to passionate reflections from grassroots spiritual voices—adds to its value. Each essay, whether discussing his economic vision, his philosophy of governance, his spiritual ethos, or his role in the institutionalisation of Taṣawwuf, reveals a different facet of a life richly lived in service of the Divine and humanity. The discussion around Aurād-i-Fathiyyah, in particular, brings to light the profound inner dimensions of his spiritual discipline and how it continues to nourish the hearts of countless followers. Furthermore, the inclusion of historical documents, rare anecdotes, critical evaluations of his major works, and translated research from primary sources to English makes this book both accessible and academically valuable. It represents a labour of love and a spiritual duty fulfilled by the editor and his team—one that deserves to be recognised and replicated by institutions committed to preserving our shared spiritual heritage.

I firmly believe that this book will serve multiple audiences: the academic seeking authentic insight, the student hungry for historical grounding, the seeker yearning for spiritual direction, and the community leader aiming for ethical guidance. Above all, it will serve as a bridge between generations, cultures, the worldly and the divine. May this noble effort be accepted



in the sight of Allah and inspire others to revisit and revitalise the teachings of Shāh-i-Hamadān, Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, with sincerity, scholarship, and service.

Prof. G.N. Khaki

Director

International Centre for Spiritual Studies

Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST)

Kashmir



Preface

*All praise be to Allah, who knows what the hearts
conceal,
And what the tongues shall not reveal.
The One before whom the believers kneel,
And on Judgement Day to Whom All shall appeal.
And may 'salah' and 'salām' be upon the one to whom
the Quran was revealed (ﷺ),
And whose Message and teachings cause the hearts and
souls to heal.*

Throwing light on the purpose of the creation of man, it is mentioned in the Holy Quran, "And I did not create the jinn and humans but to adopt My servitude." (51:56) In order to teach mankind, the code of 'servitude', Allah from the earliest times sent different messengers and prophets who, by setting a perfect example of this servitude, exalted the name of Allah and taught mankind how to be aware of the rights of the



creator and the rights of the creation. This order of divinely guided prophets came to an end with the coming of the last messenger of Allah, i.e., Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). He has been sent as a role model for all ages. Allah mentions in the Holy Quran: "In truth, in Allah's Messenger, there is for you a most perfect and beautiful model." Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was born in the full light of history, and his example has been perfectly preserved. Although fourteen centuries have passed, we know about his life in detail, the personal, social, spiritual, political and economic aspects of his life are before our eyes. His unparalleled character encompasses an infinite range of great human qualities like mercy, compassion, generosity, courage, justice, truthfulness, honesty, foresight, sincerity, patience, perseverance, love, self-sacrifice, sense of responsibility, humility, submission to God, self-control, etc. Muhammad (ﷺ), while setting unparalleled heights of godliness, also taught mankind how to be kind and helpful to one another. He said, "All creatures are (like) a family of God, and God loves most those who are kindest to His family." (Mishkat 3:1392)

Islam is a complete code of life, and it does not emphasize only the rights of the creator but also gives equal importance to the rights of the people. This was the mission which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)

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accomplished in the Arabian Peninsula and asked to spread this message of piety and peace in all parts of the world.

After Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the companions continued this mission of enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency, and then this mission was introduced in different parts of the world by some eminent scholars and saints. This blessed chain of saints is responsible for spreading and propagating the message of Islam as T. W. Arnold puts it forward in his book "The Preaching of Islam". However, it must be borne in mind that historically speaking, it would be erroneous to assume that conversion to Islam was a one-point agenda of the Sufis like the Christian missionaries. Their chief goal was to create an enhanced awareness of, and connection with, Allah – the Supreme Being among the people – transforming them to become better human beings in every respect.

As a link of this blessed chain, Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni visited the valley of Kashmir three times and brought about a great spiritual, economic, social and political transformation of Kashmir. Down the ages, the influence of Shāh-e-Hamadān has been so pervasive that there is hardly any field of life on which his impact is not seen. The lamp of prosperity kindled by



him has been enlightening this nation for more than 700 years, and his name is taken with reverence by every Kashmiri irrespective of caste, creed and colour. This land was turned into a 'Peer Vaer' (Land of the Saints), and the people tried to emulate Sufis like him for a successful life. However, lately things have changed drastically; the values introduced by Shāh-e-Hamadān and his comrades have been forgotten. As we moved away from this golden path of godliness, everything seems to be on a decline. Although the people remember his name, his teachings have been forgotten. The Sufi way of life was replaced by superstitions, rituals and customs. Though the people throng the shrines of Sufi saints, they hardly pay any heed to their teachings. The pseudo-Sufis and ignorant faith healers are held in high esteem, and they go on exploiting people for their vested interests. However, there has emerged another group of people who outrightly undermine the historical role of these Sufi saints. In the name of Tawhid (Divine Oneness of God), they have been issuing derogatory and disrespectful edicts against these saintly figures and have been trying to damage the prevalent Sufi culture of the valley. Attempts are made to weaken the relationship of the people with the prophets and saints. The love of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Auliya (the friends of God) is termed as 'hero-worship'. Unfortunately, the majority of



the people are declared as polytheists, and conspiracies are being hatched to take the younger generation away from the teachings of these great souls.

Today, the situation is that, on the one hand, some people have resorted to picking holes in everything associated with Sufi saints, and they show no respect for the great role these personalities have played in the propagation of Islam. They find faults in their 'aqeedah' and, in the name of 'critical analysis', often use disrespectful language for them. They are not satisfied with the kind of Islamic creed introduced by these Sufi saints, as they follow another brand of Islam and consider it the only correct interpretation. They are making full-fledged efforts to distance the community from them. In this process, sometimes they gain support from some people, but most of the time they face public outrage. They don't know how to strike a balance between reformation and reverence.

On the other hand, the devotees of the saints have crossed the limits of veneration; they blindly follow the customs and rituals which have no place in Shariya. Furthermore, the young generation is going away from the right path of 'tazkiya' (purification), and they seldom try to follow the footsteps of these great personalities. Most of the people are just aware of the names of these



Sufi saints and are unaware of their achievements, contributions and teachings. They are aware of only some puzzling miracles and legends associated with them. They seldom try to establish an intellectual and spiritual connection with these friends of Allah (Auliya Allah).

Thus, keeping in view the modern trends, there is a need for introducing these Sufi saints in a new way. In a way in which people not only respect them but also get an inspiration to follow in their footsteps. To have more focus on their teachings and life lessons than on the miracles and rituals.

With these things in mind, Raza-e-Mustafa Foundation, a social, cultural and educational organisation, organized a grand seminar on the life and legacy of 'The Apostle of Islam in Kashmir', Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, on 24 March 2019 at Town Hall Budgam. In this seminar, many research scholars and academicians presented their papers on diverse aspects related to the life and teachings of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Why was this seminar centered on Shāh-e-Hamadān? There are many reasons behind this. The main reason is that the greatest blessing which one can have and on which the salvation of an individual depends is the blessing of 'Iman' (Islamic faith), and as a



community, first we are highly indebted to Syed Ali Hamadāni, who introduced Islam in Kashmir. We can never forget the favours that he has offered to us. Many scholars like G M D Sufi [in 'Kashir'] Hameed Naseem Rafiabadi and others have rightly regarded him as 'The Apostle of Kashmir' for his unparalleled contribution to the propagation of Islamic values in the valley.

Besides Islam, he enlightened this nation with new ideas, arts, crafts and cultural values. There is no aspect of our collective life on which he has not left his positive impact. Allama Iqbal has rightly called him "the architect of the destiny of Ummah". Our *murshid* Syed Amanullah Bukhari used to say that if all the Kashmiris are stripped of their skins and a shoe is made out of that leather and presented to Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, still as a community we cannot repay his debt. Towards the end of the seminar, the following observations and suggestions were unanimously highlighted:

1. We should start a systematic campaign for the promotion of those universal values for the survival of which Shāh-e-Hamadān put his life.

2. The concept of Islamic Sufism (Ihsan) as practised and preached by Shāh-e-Hamadān should be revived to get inner peace and solace. Sufism should be purified of



un-Islamic rituals and practices and run according to the guidelines provided by Shāh-e-Hamadān.

3. Taking inspiration from Shāh-e-Hamadān, we should widen our minds and create an environment of peace and tolerance.

4. Shāh-e-Hamadān's inclusive precepts of 'dawah' should be put into practice.

5. Efforts should be made to revive all the khanqahs attributed to Shāh-e-Hamadān, and they should be converted into spiritual training schools.

6. Most of the books of Shāh-e-Hamadān have not been published yet, and they are not available for the people. Manuscripts are lying in various libraries on which research work is yet to be done. Most of the books have not been translated into widely understood languages like English and Urdu, and as a result, people are not able to benefit from them. Under the endeavour "The Collected Works of Shāh-e-Hamadān ", all the available works of Shāh-e-Hamadān should be published and translated, as the new generation is just aware of his name and not his work. In Kashmir, we find many institutions, shops and roads named after Shāh-e-Hamadān, but in reality, no significant work is done on him. At least there should be an institution equipped



with modern facilities fully dedicated to the promotion of Shāh-e-Hamadān studies. This institution would publish, translate and interpret his works on various aspects of human life.

At the end of the seminar, many participants expressed their views about the collection and publication of the papers presented in the seminar on Shāh-e-Hamadān. This responsibility was put on my shoulders, and we contacted many academicians and research scholars to send their papers for this project. We had to work really hard in collecting, editing and publishing this work, and thankfully, as we walked on, things began to unfold for us.

With the grace of Almighty Allah, this task was accomplished and titled as "Kashmir Mein Islami Inquilab Aur Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān." The book in the Urdu language was published in 2021, earning a lot of popularity. The book received an overwhelming response equally from different 'mashaikh', ulema and academicians, and they congratulated us for this kind of work. The eminent personalities like Prof. Akhtar ul Wasey, Prof. Syed Aleem Ashraf Jaisi, Prof. Hameed Naseem Rafiabadi, Prof. Khwaja Muhammad Ekram, Maulana Mubarak Hussain Misbahi, Dr Zeeshan Misbahi, Prof. GR Malik, Prof. Abdul Rahman War,



Mufti Abdul Hameed Nayemi, Maulana Showkat Hussain Keing, and Mufti Azam Kashmir. Mufti Nasir ul Islam, Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi, Dr Shakeel Shafayi, Dr Ghulam Nabi Khaki, etc., praised this effort of presenting Shāh-e-Hamadān in a new light as per the needs of the present age. The feedback was very encouraging from all sides. In particular, I would like to mention here that one of the most prolific scholars of the valley personally congratulated me for bringing about this book. He further said that once after delivering a lecture at Kashmir University, some students approached him, saying that they were confused about whether they should become Devbandi, Bareilvi, Salafi or Jamati to get the correct interpretation of Islam. To this, he said that he answered, "You need not go anywhere; follow the footsteps of Shāh-e-Hamadān, and you will be on the right track."

Right from the beginning, many well-wishers suggested that we need to have a book like this in English language as well so that the message of Shāh-e-Hamadān may get a wider readership.

We contacted different scholars to assist us in this noble cause. Thankfully some of them responded positively and sent their write-ups. Some critical articles and research papers needed to be translated from Urdu,



and for this task I requested many friends to be part of this project by offering a helping hand. Unfortunately, I didn't get a positive response. The professional and personal responsibilities would not allow me to take on this herculean task myself, but finally I was left with no options but to go for it. Many times, I tried to get some time for it, but the domestic engagements didn't allow me to do so.

In these circumstances, I was deputed to Jammu by Samagra Shiksha to be part of a committee constituted for an interesting assignment related to books. Being away from home proved to be a blessing in disguise as I got a good quantity of time to take this assignment. Alhamdulillah, the result of the hard work is in your hands. I hope that, like the Urdu version, this book will also succeed in making a mark in academic and literary circles.

Personally, I am extremely grateful to all the dynamic members of Raza-e-Mustafa Foundation in general and Pir Manzoor Ahmad (Chairman) in particular for keeping me motivated for this work and showing interest in the publication of this book. I am also grateful to all the academicians, scholars and writers who responded to our call and sent their precious write-ups for this book. I express my gratitude

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to Dr Jawhar Quddusi as well for providing useful guidance regarding publication of this book.

I'm also indebted to my spouse Shafiya Ahmad for providing me unconditional support for this assignment.

Those who offered financial assistance in publishing this book also deserve special gratitude. May Allah accept this effort and bless all of us.

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

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Who is Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani?

Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani (Persian: میر سید علی ہمدانی; c.1312–1385 CE) was a Sufi Sunni Muslim saint of the Kubrawiyya order, who played an important role in spread of Islam in the Kashmir Valley of northern India. He was born in Hamadan, Iran and preached Islam in Central Asia and South Asia. He died in Swat on his way from Srinagar to Mecca and was buried in Khatlan, Tajikistan in 1385 CE, aged 71–72. Hamadani was also addressed honorifically throughout his life as the Shāh-e-Hamadān ("King of Hamadan"), Amīr-i Kabīr ("the Great Commander"), and Ali Thani ("second Ali"). (Wikipedia)



Words of Appreciation by some Luminaries

1. *Syed Makhdum Ashraf Jehangir Simnani (d.1386 AD)*

"I benefited so much from his (i.e., Shāh-e-Hamadān's) company that I cannot describe it in words. He was just like a splendid sun and I was with him like a dust particle." (Lataif-e-Ashrafi)

2. *Sultan Qutub Al Din (d.1389): The poet- ruler of Kashmir*

"As that (spiritual) king came from the realm of 'wilayah'

The standard of Islam was raised in Kashmir.

They asked, "Who has educated this country?"

I replied, "[It was educated] by the king of guidance."

(*Manqabat al Jawahir/ Islam in Kashmir*)



3. *Nooruddin Ja'far Badakhshi (d.1394 AD)*

“The guide to the seekers on the path that leads to God, the mentor to those looking for a meeting with the Divine Beauty, the well-known master Syed Ali Hamadani...” (Khulasat-ul-Manaqib)

4. *Nund Reshi Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (d.1438 AD)*

"Prophet Muhammad is the supreme king who, on account of his intercession, will take his ummah to paradise in the hereafter. Nund Reshi would submit a request to Shāh-e-Hamadān, to take him to heaven in his company in view of his special position in the eyes of the Prophet ." (Kuliyat-i-Sheikh Aalam)

5. *Maulana Jami (d. 1492 AD)*

"He (Shāh-e-Hamadān) was a master of the outward and esoteric aspects of the religion. His works are famous in the circles of those having interest in esoteric sciences." (Nafahat-ul-Uns)

6. *Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi Kashmiri (d. 1594 AD)*

"(Shāh-e-Hamadān) is the Second Ali (in knowing the mysteries of Shariyah and Tariqah) and is the great master in this field. He is the namesake of Hazrat Ali and is also from his progeny. When this pioneer of the truth came [to Kashmir], it was as if Hazrat Ali Murtadha



himself had come. Shāh-e-Hamadān is the leader of the Gnostics and the head of all the saints. Since Hazrat Ali is the gate of the prophetic knowledge, Shāh-e-Hamadān is the gatekeeper of that gate. All praises to Allah that we have got such a great leader and he is our guide in the path of love and loyalty." (*Kuliyat-i-Sarfi*)

7. *Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlavi (d. 1762 AD)*

"The perfect researcher of the mysteries of God, Ali Thani, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani collected these 'Awrad' [collected in 'Awrad-i-Fathiyya'] i.e., (remembrances) from 1400 great saints...if the virtues and blessings of these 'Awrad' are explained, we'll fall short of words as Shāh-e-Hamadān travelled the whole world three times [in order to collect these 'Awrad'." (*Al-Intibah fi Salasil-i-Auliya*)

8. *Allama Iqbal (d. 1938 AD)*

"That leader of the leaders

That envoy from Persia

Whose hand is the architect of the destiny of nations.

Imam Ghazali himself learned the lesson of 'God is He' [from his ancestors] and drew meditation and thought from his stock.



That lord of the Paradise-like land, Advisor alike to the chief, the saint and the Kings.

To the region that liberal handed master

Gave knowledge, craft, culture and religion.

That man created a miniature Iran

With rare and heart-ravishing arts;

With one glance he unravels a hundred knots-

Rise, and let his arrow transfix your heart." (*Javed Nama*)

9. *Walter Lawrence (d.1940 AD)*

"The saint who has exercised the most direct influence on the region of Kashmir was Mir Saiyad Ali of Hamadan, who visited the valley in the time of Kutb-ud-Din and practically established Islam in the valley. He is known as Amir-i-Kabir, Shah-i-Hamadan, and Ali Sani, and the Hindus say that he received his inspiration from a Hindu lady, Lalishri, who was an incarnation of a goddess. The Musalmans deny this, but they hold her name in great respect, and speak of her as Lai Dedi...His mosque, the Shah-i-Hamadan in Srinagar, is one of the most sacred places in Kashmir, and is a worthy memorial of a man who in his time exerted an enormous influence over the country." (*The Valley of Kashmir*)

10. *Sheikh Muhammad Ikram (d.1973 AD)*

"Amir Kabir Syed Hamadāni came to Kashmir from Iran. He was a great scholar and his status is very high as far as the spiritual history of the Islamic world is concerned. He had both majesty (jalal) and beauty (jamal) in his personality. Apart from having a great spiritual and religious insight, he had an outstanding administrative ability. With his efforts and with the support of his comrades, Islam was firmly established in Kashmir. (Aab-i-Kauthar)

11. *Allama Qasim Shah Bukhari Kashmiri (d.1999 AD)*

"If you look at the life and character of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, in piety and purity, he is unparalleled. Study hundreds of his books, you will find him the perfect follower of the Prophet, the champion of 'tariqah' 'haqeeqah' and 'marifah'...he was an epitome of the great qualities. There were no good manners and morals that he did not excel. It was as a result of these outstanding virtues that he achieved success in a very short duration of time what the other preachers could not accomplish in hundreds of years. (Anfas-i-Qudsiyya)

12. *Prof. Mohibbul Hasan (d.1999)*

"The most important event in the reign of Qutbudin was the arrival of Syed Ali Hamadani, commonly known as

Amir-i-Kabir or Ali-i-Sani, who was one of the most remarkable personalities of the fourteenth century Muslim world...After Bulbul Shah came other Sufis, but the most prominent among them was Syed Ali Hamadani, who by his learning, piety, and devotion is said to have made 37000 converts to Islam...The real value of Sayyid Ali's work in Persia and central Asia has yet to be properly assessed. But it appears that he achieved his greatest triumphs in the valley of Kashmir, where even today after the lapse of more than 450 years his influence continues to be felt.” (Kashmir Under Sultans)

13. Allama Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (d. 2000 AD)

"Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni was a pious person, a perfect saint, a lover of God, a lover of the Prophet (ﷺ), a seeker of God, familiar with the ways of the religion, and he had such a great missionary zeal for Islam that millions of people were guided by him towards Islam. The driving force behind this outstanding zeal was the concept of Tawhid i.e., the Oneness of God. It needs to remember that Syed Ali Hamadāni did not conquer the people with a sword, rather, he conquered it with, sincerity, compassion, spirituality and love. Once I said the same thing in a gathering of the Arabs that can we gauge the greatness of this person who visited the place thrice and

converted the entire region to Islam." (*Tohfa-e-Kashmir*)

14. *PNK Bamzai (d.2007)*

"Syed Ali Hamadāni was a versatile genius, a great saint and a scholar. He wrote profusely on Sufism and elucidated several earlier works on the subject. Although a great authority on theology and philosophy, he did not disdain to write on such varied secular subjects as jurisprudence, political science, and the science of physiognomy. Author of a more than a hundred works on logic, ethics and other subjects in prose, Syed Ali also wrote Persian poetry of no mean order. His odes are naturally Sufistic and his mystical poems illustrate his broad humanistic outlook on life and religion." (*Culture and Political History of Kashmir*)

15. *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (d. 2021 AD)*

"Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni holds the position of the spiritual founder of Kashmir. The Muslims of Kashmir generally call him Amir Kabir (the great leader). The present religious ideology of Kashmir is largely the result of his dawah efforts, for the people of Kashmir followed his mission to the fullest extent." (*The Dawn Over Kashmir*)



16. Dr. Mohammad Ishaq (*The University of Dhaka*)

“Hadith [corpus of the sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ] was first brought to Kashmir by Syed Amir-i-Kabir Ali Bin Shihab al-Hamadani, an itinerant Darwish of Khurasan, who entered the territory in 773/1371 with a retinue of seven hundred followers. He was a great success as a missionary in Kashmir where he and his disciples were mainly responsible for the expansion of Islam. So great was his influence over there that Sultan Qutb-al-Din, the ruler of Kashmir, took pride in accepting his discipleship.”
(*India's Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature*)



A Historical Outline

1. 1314 AD, 21 October/714 AH, 12 Rajab ul Murajab, (Monday)

Birth: Hamadān, Iran

2. 1324 AD:

Learnt the entire Quran by heart, Passed the basic course in religious sciences under the tutelage of Sheikh Alauddin Simnani

3. 1325 AD:

Education under the guidance of Sheikh Ali Dosti

4. 1333 AD:

Higher education under the tutelage of Sheikh Mahmood Mazdqani



5. 1353 AD

Completion of the spiritual struggle (mujahidah) and touring the Islamic world

6. 1372 AD:

Birth of the son Mir Muhammad Hamadani

7. 1372-1379 AD

Residence at Khatlan, Guiding the disciples, Writing most of the books

8. 1372 AD, 11th September/ 774AH, 12th Rabi-al-Awwal

1st visit to Kashmir

9. 1380 AD:

2nd visit to Kashmir

10. 1383-84 AD:

3rd and last visit to Kashmir

11. 1387, 19 January/ 6th Dhul-Hijjah 786 AH

The Demise at Kunar Pakhli



12. 1387 AD, 4 July/25 Jamadi-al-Awwal 787 AH

Burial at Kolab in Tajikistan

Note: There are so many differences and contradictions found among historians regarding the historical dates and details in connection to Shāh-e-Hamadān. However, some chronological details have been put here after consulting a wide range of books with the purpose to familiarize the readers at least with a fragmentary historical outline. Needless to say, that there is still a scope for further research.



Abridged Biography of Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Introduction

History bears witness to the fact that Sufis have played a vibrant and significant role in conveying the message of Islam to different corners of the world. We can find numerous examples in world history where they played a great role in the propagation of the Islamic faith. Professor T. W. Arnold, in his masterpiece "The Preaching of Islam", collected many sources from different parts of the world and stated that Sufis played an outstanding role in spreading the message of Islam. In the context of Kashmir, he writes,

“To complete this survey of Islam in India, some account still remains to be given of the spread of this faith



in Kashmir and thence beyond the borders of India into Thibet. Of all the provinces and states of India (with the exception of Sind) Kashmir contains the largest number of Muhammadans (namely 70 per cent.) in proportion to the whole population, but unfortunately historical facts that should explain the existence in this state of so many Musalmans, almost entirely of Hindu or Thibetan origin, are very scanty. But all the evidence leads us to attribute it on the whole to a long-continued missionary movement inaugurated and carried out mainly by faqirs and dervishes...” (1)

The Sufis were not only saintly figures but also men of action, and they benefitted mankind with their courteous and generous behaviour. In the Indian subcontinent, they worked as outstanding spiritual masters of their times and fostered cordial social interactions with people of other faiths. They were triumphant in spreading their faith because they refused to impose their beliefs on non-Muslims. Their places of worship (khanqahs) provided protection to the wanderers and destitute. Eventually people in huge numbers across the subcontinent rallied round their ideology of peace and prosperity. For them, Sufism was simple to digest and easy to practice.



The Muslim rulers conquered territories in different parts of the world and were able to establish their supremacy. Mostly the subjects of these rulers accepted their regimes unwillingly. However, the Sufis, with their exemplary behaviour and magnanimous character, were able to find a place in the hearts of these people. Usually, the Sufis would maintain distance from the ruling class and focus on their relationship with the common people. They lived among them and shared their problems and tribulations and were able to gain respect in their eyes. That is the main reason that the names of the Muslim rulers have vanished from the minds of the people, but the Sufi saints still have a special place of reverence in the hearts of the people. The Sufis proved their mettle by finding a respectable position in alien lands and emerged as the lighthouses of spiritual guidance.

Sufism emerged as a spiritual force in the Indian subcontinent during the time of Mahmood Ghaznavi; there emerged Sufi settlements in different parts of India. A clear evidence of these early Sufi activities is the celebrated work of Shaykh Uthman Ali Hajweri (d. 1072) (commonly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh Lahori), written in the Ghaznavid period during the eleventh century, 'Kashf al Mahjub', which provides a lot of information about the teachings of Sufism. The book is



considered "the earliest formal treatise on Sufism in Persian" and is very popular in the global Sufi circles. After Shaykh Uthman Ali Hajweri, Moinuddin Chishti (d. 1236) is by far the most outstanding among the great Sufi masters of the subcontinent. Indeed, he is generally accepted as the fountainhead of Islamic spiritual movements in India. He arrived in Delhi in the reign of Iltutmish and later settled in Ajmer, wherefrom as missionaries, he trained and spread his spiritual caliphs all over India.

As far as the spread of Islam in Kashmir is concerned, a prominent Sufi saint of the Suhrawardy order, Syed Sharaf Al-Din, commonly known as Bulbul Shah, is credited with introducing Islam to the ruling class. He came to Kashmir from Turkistan during the reign of Suhadeva. He was instrumental in converting the reigning Buddhist ruler of Kashmir, Rinchana (1320-1323 AD), to Islam. (2)

Rinchana (now Sadar al-Din) built the first known Khanqah in Kashmir at Bulbul Langar. Baba Mishkati in 'Asrar ul Abrar' mentions that Sheikh Sharaf-ud-Din was the disciple of Shah Nimatullah Farsi, who was a disciple of Shihab ul Din Suhrawardy. According to M. Ashraf, "The conversion of the ruler to Islam marked a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir. Not



only did Islam now receive political patronage but also became a 'reference group culture' – a status-improving way of life.” (3) Rinchana's conversion to Islam was followed by the conversion of a large number of people, including his Hindu Prime Minister, Rawanchandra. Yet, the fervour with which Islam spread during the period of Rinchana could not last long, as the ruler died hardly two years after his conversion, and the throne again passed into the hands of the Hindus, who ruled for another sixteen years till the Sultanate was finally established in Kashmir in 1339 by Shah Mir, who had by then established a strong position in the government. The Muslim rulers established good relationships with the Hindu majority, as they needed their cooperation for political stability.

During the reign of Sultan Shahab-ud-Din (1354-1373), the process of Islamisation got activated again primarily because of the arrival of four Kubravi Sufis, accompanied by their followers and families. They were Syed Hussain Simnani, Syed Tajuddin, Syed Hassan and Syed Haider. They were close relatives and associates of Syed Ali Hamadani sent on a special mission to see and report to him whether Kashmir provided favourable conditions for preaching Islam. Syed Ali Hamadani himself waited at Ghaur (Afghanistan) for a reply. Having informed Syed Ali Hamadani of the conducive



socio-political climate of Kashmir, he, along with his 700 followers, settled in the valley. He visited Ladakh, Baltistan, Skardu, Gilgit, etc. to propagate the message of Islam. This invitation to Islam was unique in the sense that he did not come here alone but brought with him a large number of preachers, artisans and artists to lay the foundation of a 'New Kashmir' in which spiritual sustenance and material prosperity flourished at the same time. He impacted the region to such an extent that the marks of this revolution are found in every sphere of life in Kashmir today. Even today, Syed Ali Hamadāni is popularly known in Kashmir by various referential titles, such as Amir Kabir, Shāh-e-Hamadān, Bani-e-Islam, Bani-e-Musalmani, Ali Thani, Shah i Khatlan and Mohsin-i-Kashmir.

Multi-faceted Personality of Shāh-e-Hamadān

Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni (may Allah be pleased with him) had a multi-dimensional personality. He was an erudite scholar, a prolific and versatile writer and a widely travelled missionary. He was a mystic, scholar, philosopher, poet, sociologist, economist, jurist, reformer and philanthropist at the same time.

Family

The father of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni was Syed Shahabuddin, who was a politically and socially prominent personality. He

◆—————❧—————◆

was the governor of Hamadan. Their family had been living in Hamadan for about two hundred years, and the Seljuk sultans held this family in high esteem. Shāh-e-Hamadān's mother's name was 'Syeda Fatima', who was pious and scholarly. Despite being busy in the political affairs, Syed Shahab-ud-Din was a broad-visioned and God-fearing person who paid special attention towards the holistic education of his son so that he may shine like a sun in ample darkness. For the academic and spiritual upbringing of his son, he took the services of some great spiritual masters of his time. Despite being raised in a politically active family, Syed Ali Hamadāni did not show any interest in the affairs of his father; instead, he came under the influence of his maternal uncle Alauddin, who was a great Sufi of his time.

Birth

Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni was born in Hamadan, Iran, on 12th October 1314 AD/12th Rajab 714 AH. Hamadān is the name of a province of Iran. It is located in a vast area that is surrounded by the heights of the mountain Alvand on both sides. For centuries, it had been a centre of knowledge.

Lineage

Syed Ali Hamadani was 'najeeb-ul-tarfeen syed'i.e.,related to Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (ﷺ)

from both paternal and maternal sides. From paternal side, he is Hussaini and from maternal side, he is Hasani. Hasan (RA) and Hussain (RA) are the blessed grandsons of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They are the sons of Hazrat Maula Ali (RA) and Syeda Fatima Al Zohra (RA). In knowledge, spirituality and character, Shāh-e-Hamadān showed great resemblance with Maula Ali (RA), the fourth caliph of Islam, and hence he was called Ali Thani (the second Ali) by the scholars of his age. Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni was proud of this great lineage that goes back to Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (ﷺ) as he would say,

خيرة الله من الخلق ابي
ثم اُمي وانا من الخيرين
فضة قد صبغته من ذهب
وانا الفضة ابن الذهبين
من له جد كجدي مثلنا
او كامي وانا من الخيرين

My father [Syedina Ali Al Murtadha RA] is the best of all people, and after him is my mother [Syeda Fatima Al Zohra RA]. In lineage, I belong to these two best people. I am like silver, but gilded with gold, which signifies that I am the son of two extraordinary individuals. Whose father is better than mine, and



whose mother is better than me? I am the son of the best parents. (Khulasat-ul-Manaqib)

The detailed Shajra-e-Nasb (family tree) according to Dr Farooq Bukhari is as under,

Mir Syed Ali Hamadani→Syed Shahabuddin→ Syed Muhammad→ Syed Ali→ Syed Yousuf→ Syed Sharf→ Syed Muhibullah → Syed Muhammad Thani→ Syed Jafar→ Syed Abdullah→ Syed Muhammad→ Syed Ali→ Syed Hassan→ Syed Hussain→ Syed Jafar Al Hajjah→ Syed Abdullah Zahid→ Syed Ali Zain-ul-Abidin→Imam Hussain Shaheed-i-Karbala→Syidina Ali Bin Abi Talib (4)

Early Education and Upbringing

Initially, Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni received training under the tutelage of his maternal uncle Syed Allauddin. First of all, he memorised the Holy Quran when he was only twelve.

In order to raise their child with the best education, both the father and the mother took special care of him. Although his father was more engaged with the political and administrative affairs, he left no stone unturned in providing the best facilities to his son. His mother Fatima and the uncle Allauddin took special care of him until he reached high levels of knowledge. Right from



the beginning, Shāh-e-Hamadān was different from other children. He had no inclination towards wasting his time in useless pursuits, and he often spent his time in reading, writing, and learning new concepts and activities. He would walk on the path of virtue in accordance with his own inner aptitude. Thus, in childhood and teenage years, he attained what others could achieve in a lifetime. Nuruddin Badakhshi writes in *Khulasat-ul-Manaqib* that Mir Syed Ali Hamadani once said,

“I had an uncle, Alauddin. He was one of the great saints of Allah. In childhood, under his upbringing, I memorised the Quran. He made the spiritual world closer to me. He entrusted me to one of his disciples so that I could acquire knowledge from him. At the age of twelve, I observed my teacher reciting some supplications in isolation and in ecstasy shaking his head. I asked him to teach me those supplications as well. He taught me something, and after three days I felt a strange spiritual bliss. As I followed my teacher, I saw the magnificent face of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) in a dream saying, “O my son, you cannot achieve such heights of knowledge at this time; your teachers will guide you to achieve it.”

About his religious and spiritual upbringing, Shāh-e-Hamadān himself says,



“During my travels I met 1400 saints and received blessings from 400 of them in a single assembly. At the request of the king, the scholars and saints of Khorasan and Iraq had gathered there. My father and uncle were also present there. About 400 Sufis sat on the right side of the king, and other famous scholars sat on his left side. My father, holding my hand, asked them to pray for my well-being. All the scholars and Sufis present in the assembly prayed for me, and then my father made another supplication that all the scholars and Sufis may recite one hadith for his son. Among them, Sheikh Ala-ud-Daulah Simnani was the first to recite a hadith for me, and Khawaja Qutb-ud-Din Neshapuri was the last one. In this way, I compiled 400 sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that reached me with a sound chain of narrators.”

For further education, Syed Shahabuddin took him to the spiritual master Taqi-ud-Din Ali Dusti. He learnt the elementary principles of Sufism from him for two years. Mulla Haidar Badakhshi writes about Shāh-e-Hamadān's meeting with Shaykh Ali Dosti that one day Shāh-e-Hamadān asked him why he is so kind to him at all times. To this, Shaykh Ali Dosti replied that once he was in the company of the great Sheikh Ala-ud-Daula Simnani, who told him, “When you see Syed Ali Hamadani, teach him 'zikr char zarb' on my behalf.” On

being asked who Ali Hamadani is, he replied, 'I have been ordered by the Holy Prophet [in a dream] to leave something for his child before leaving [the world].' On being asked who his child is, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "My child is Sayyid Ali Hamadani; tell your disciples that as soon as they see him, they should deliver [my] spiritual cloak (khirqa) to him." (5)

After Taqi-ud-Din Ali Dusti's death, Syed Ali Hamadāni turned to another spiritual guide, Sheikh Sharaf-ud-Din Mahmood Muzdqani, and spent six years in his Khanqah. When Shāh-e-Hamadān intended to become the disciple of Sheikh Muzdqani, he was told, at the very outset, that the primary condition for anyone to enter into his discipleship would be to shun one's family and worldly pride. He was asked.

"You [first] keep in order the shoes of this Black slave, the sweeper of the khanqah, so that you consider yourself nothing, which is a prerequisite for one in search of a way to Allah. With great humility I obeyed his orders." (6)

It is mentioned in Manqabat-ul-Jawahar that Syed Ali Hamadāni once said,

"I was 12 years old when I saw Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in a dream along with his blessed companions



stationed in a palace. I tried to reach him but couldn't find the stair. After getting perplexed, I requested, "O blessed grandfather, let me to reach you!" On hearing this, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "You cannot reach me unless you turn to Sheikh Mehmood Mazdqani." On waking up, I asked my Sheikh Syed Alaudin about the matter. I came to know that he has himself been his disciple. Then I turned to Sheikh Mehmood Mazdqani who gave me a great respect saying,

"This night, I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) in a dream. He said," O Mehmood! Today my son is going to meet you."
(7)

Sheikh Mehmood Mazdqani was a great Sufi sheikh from Kubravi order. He gave final touch to Ali Hamadani's spiritual education. Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni excelled in almost all the branches of knowledge of his time, like the Quran, tafsir, hadith, history, jurisprudence, ilm-al-kalam, mysticism, literature and philosophy.

Travels

In many spiritual orders of the Sufis, travel is taken as an essential part of the spiritual struggle (mujahidah) of a seeker (salik) of the truth. In the world of materialistic pushes and pulls, a seeker (Salik) is asked to explore new



places and 'let the dead leaves fall.' Hence, the spiritual teacher of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, Sheikh Muzdqani, desired him to complete his spiritual education by undergoing travel in the world, which Shāh-e-Hamadān undertook and travelled almost the whole Muslim world and obtained blessings from the great scholars and saints of his time. It is estimated that he traveled at least three continents of the world. It is reported that he travelled three times over the whole (Islamic) world during this period and he performed Haj 12 times in his life. During his travel in India, he attained spiritual cloak (khirqa) from Sheikh Yahya Muneri of Bihar and he was accompanied by Syed Ashraf Jehangir Simnani in many travels. He would closely observe the cultures, manners and etiquettes of alien lands. As he mentions that the people of Ma Wara-un-Nahr are truthful, the people of Taliqan are sincere, the people of Quhistan are poor but devoted etc.

One can easily understand how difficult these travels would have been in those times without the conveniences of the present era. There were no roads, no convenient means of transport, and there were the dangers of wild animals and robbers. The mules, horses and camels were used to travel from one place to another. The unfavourable weather conditions would make the travel more difficult.



It is reported that during his travels Shāh-e-Hamadān met some fourteen hundred distinguished saints (Auliya), and he was not only benefitted by their advice but also gained a lot from their companionship (suhbah). It is reported that once he said,

“I have traced out some 1400 Sufi saints in my travels to different lands.”

It is during travel that he met the great scholars like Abdul Razaq Kashi, Imam Abdullah Yafai, Sheikh Ashraf Jehangir Simnani, Sharfuddin Yahya Muneri etc. (8) These travels continued for about twenty-one years. He visited many places, including Asia Minor, the Middle East, Rome (present-day Turkey), Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka, etc. Through his spiritual insight, he put an end to the fighting that was taking place between Christians and Muslims at many places. He influenced the Christians to such an extent that a large number of them converted to Islam. After extensively travelling to different parts of the world, he returned to Hamadān in 1352.

Efforts for Self-Discipline (*mujahadah*)

In Sufism, mujahadah means to struggle with the carnal self to find a way to God. It is one of the major duties that a Sufi must perform throughout his mystical journey toward God-consciousness. As it is mentioned in the



Holy Quran, “ And those who strive in our way, We will guide them to our paths.” (29:69) The purpose of mujahadah is to conquer the temptations of the self in order to purify one's soul and bring one's soul to a state of readiness to receive the divine light.

Right from the beginning, Shāh-e-Hamadān went through one of the most strict disciplines envisaged by Sufi saints. Probably that is the main reason behind his success in the endeavours of propagation of Islam in alien lands. It was his balanced and fully matured spiritual personality that, like a magnet, people from all tastes and cultures thronged around and asked for his blessings.

Shāh-e-Hamadān belongs to the Kubrawi Sufi order, which envisages its followers to undergo laborious and stringent spiritual training in the form of adhkar (remembrances) and other practices like acts of penance and austerity, such as prolonged fasts and abstinence from the comforts of life. In the Kubrawi Sufi order, the following 10 rules are emphasised:

1. *Taubah* (Repentance from sins and heedlessness)
2. *Zuhd* (detachment from worldly possessions and temptations)
3. *Tawakkul* (complete reliance on God)
4. *Qinat* (contentment)



5. *Uzlat* (seclusion)
6. *Dhikr* (remembrance of God)
7. *Tawajjuh* (complete attention towards God)
8. *Sabr* (patience on trials and tribulations)
9. *Ridha* (satisfaction with God's Ruling)
10. *Muhabbah* (Love of God) (9)

It is quite obvious that these values cannot be attained without undergoing rigorous training. Under his spiritual guides, Shāh-e-Hamadān successfully completed all the stages of mujahadah. He lived a very simple and austere life. Many rulers of the time had a great respect for him, and they even offered him many luxuries of life, but Shāh-e-Hamadān refused to take their favours. He would earn his livelihood by making caps with his own hands and guide his disciples to strive for halal provisions. He used to eat and rest only as per the needs of the body and abstain from comforts of life. Once he said,

“Had it not been the way of the Prophet (sunnah) to eat and drink, I would have preferred to live without eating or drinking anything... When it was a winter morning in Rome, I tested myself by breaking the ice and bathing in chilly water. This hardship continued for forty days, but I endured it with composure. As far as my dress is concerned, I had nothing but a worn khirqa



(cloak). (Khulasat-ul-Manaqib) (10)

Shāh-e-Hamadān's travels were also full of trials and hardships, but he endured them by showing full reliance on the Almighty. It was the fruit of these hardships that he emerged victorious in all parts of the world and motivated thousands of people to accept Islam.

The Character of Humility

Talking about his greatness, in a letter written to Sheikh Alauddin Hisari, Shāh-e-Hamadān writes, “I am not just the dervish of the earth but of the heavens as well... Hamadani has found a treasure which is beyond human comprehension.”

Despite reaching unparalleled spiritual heights, Shāh-e-Hamadān remained free from pride or arrogance. He remained humble and grounded. Once he said to his comrades,

“By Allah! For the past fifty years I have not voluntarily slept on my side on the ground. Yet, despite all this hard work and exertion, I do not consider myself better than a lowly dog.” (Khulasat-ul-Manaqib) (11)

Back to Homeland

At the insistence of the fellow countrymen, he came back to his native town and settled back in Hamadan. He



got married at the age of forty and he would spend most of his time training the young seekers of the truth for the divine path. He would dedicate his days to the service of mankind, and his nights were spent in the remembrance of God (dhikr-i-Allah). He built many mosques and hospices for his native people and bequeathed his entire belongings in the way of Allah. (12)

Arrival in Khatlan (Present-day Tajikistan)

It is reported that the famous conqueror and ruler Amir Timur was misled by some of his courtiers regarding Syed Ali Hamadani. They presented him as a charlatan who is always proud of his lineage. The rising popularity of Syed Ali Hamadani was seen as a potential threat to his rule by some courtiers. As a result, Timur made things difficult for him in Hamadan. Under these circumstances, he left Hamadan for Khatlan (present-day Tajikistan). He bought some land there and constructed a Khanqah for his disciples. Among others, Khawaja Ishaq Khatlani, the son of Aram Shah, the minister of Timur, also joined his Khanqah.

However, Dr Shams-ud-Din Ahmed and some other writers have taken his tussle with Timor as historically incorrect. He writes, "Amir Timur himself was a God-fearing and pious man. He held the Sufis of his time in high esteem and would request them to pray



that he may conquer new lands. He was a devotee of Syed Amir Kulal and would turn towards him for spiritual guidance. Masum Ali Shah Naib Al-Sadr writes in his book 'Tara'iq ul Haqaiq', "Amir Timur was very kind and affectionate to the pious people and was always attracted to the company of scholars and mystics, especially Amir Syed Ali Hamadāni, Amir Syed Kalal Bukhari and Sheikh Syed Zain-ud-Din Abu Bakr (Ali) Tayyabari. The stories of his atrocities to Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, which have been mentioned in some unauthentic books, are far from the truth, and there is no solid evidence of these things." (13)

Visit to Kashmir

Shāh-e-Hamadān's visit to Kashmir can rightly be called the turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir. In fact, the most important travel of Syed Ali Hamadāni was his visit to Kashmir, which had far-reaching effects on the socio-political history of the region.

Darakhshan Abdullah writes in '*Religious Policy of the Sultans of Kashmir*', "Syed Ali is said to have visited Kashmir three times. But the chronology of Syed Ali's visit to Kashmir does not substantiate this fact, besides the confusion created by the primary sources by giving contradictory dates of his visit to Kashmir. According to later authorities, Syed Ali visited Kashmir three times:



first in 774 AH (1372 AD), second time in 781 AH (1379 AD) and third time in 785 (1383 AD). The early sources are unanimous in saying that Syed Ali Hamadāni came to Kashmir only once, but they do not agree among themselves about the date of his arrival. As already mentioned, according to some scholars, Ali Hamadāni visited Kashmir to avoid his confrontation with Amir Timur.” (14) However, according to Dr Shams-ud-Din Ahmed and others, he came to Kashmir on the behest of a dream in which Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) advised him to go to Kashmir for the propagation of Islam.. Syed Ali himself is said to have remarked that wherever he went, God the Most Powerful commanded him to travel and preach Islam to the people.”(15)

Prof. A. Q. Rafiqui writes, “Syed Ali and his associates must have been attracted to Kashmir because Muslim rule was newly established there and [it] offered considerable opportunities for popularising Islam” (16).

Islam was already introduced in the valley by Sheikh Sharf Al Din Bulbul Shah, and by his efforts, King Rinchen had already accepted the new faith. In the words of Mohammad Ashraf Wani, "There is, however, little doubt that even after the lapse of fifty years since the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate and in spite of the presence of the Muslim preachers for a pretty long time,



the Muslims still formed only a microscopic minority of Kashmir. And what is more, their life pattern, including that of the ruling family, was not different from that of the Hindus. ...The Muslim community had virtually adopted a Hindu way of life, to the extent that they were even worshipping idols, celebrating the Hindu festivals, and dressing themselves after the Hindu fashion... We can find that the Sultan of the time, in flagrant violation of the shariyah, wedded to two sisters simultaneously. To be sure, at the advent of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, Islam in Kashmir just hung on to its eyelids." (17)

The Sultan, in accordance with Shāh-e-Hamadān's instructions, divorced the elder sister and re-married the younger named Sura who became the mother of his two sons, Sikandar and Haibat. Shāh-e-Hamadān also enjoined the Sultan to wear the dress common in Muslim countries. He held discussions with the Brahman priests and in this way secured many converts to his faith. (18)

Islam in Kashmir received great impetus because of Shāh-e-Hamadān and his followers. As already mentioned, before his arrival in Kashmir, Shāh-e-Hamadān had already deputed his two cousins Syed Tajuddin and Syed Hussain to investigate the religious atmosphere of Kashmir. Once he received a positive



report, he came to Kashmir along with his band of disciples. The purpose of his coming to Kashmir was purely to preach Islam, which he considered the first and foremost duty.

According to 'Tarikh-e-Farishta', in 1372, when Shāh-e-Hamadān reached near Srinagar, Sultan Shahab-ud-Din of Kashmir welcomed him and brought him to the city with great honour and dignity. At that time Sultan Shahab-ud-Din was planning to get involved in a war with Feroze Tughlaq. Shāh-e-Hamadān facilitated reconciliation between these two Muslim kings, and the atmosphere of war cooled down. According to some reports, about 37,000 people were converted to Islam by his efforts. From Kashmir, Shāh-e-Hamadān travelled to Ladakh, Baltistan, Skardu and Gilgit, where the people in large numbers accepted Islam on his hands. After staying in Srinagar, Shāh-e-Hamadān visited the whole valley. He would teach the basic beliefs and principles of Islam to the people on a daily basis. He would often preach in the Persian language, and some of his devotees would act as translators. He is said to have converted not only common masses but also impressed even Hindu priests and Brahmans with his spiritual knowledge and power, who accepted Islam along with their hundreds of followers. First, he tried to mould the Sultan and his



nobles as per the tenets of Islam, as he was a firm believer of the view that the common people imitate the behaviour and culture of their rulers, and it is also true that he first concentrated on converting the people of the city because of the paramount role of the cities as catalysts of social change. However, it is recorded that he also expanded his activities to Pampore, Lethpora, Awantipora, Bijbihara and many other places.

Throughout this period, along with preaching Islam, Shāh-e-Hamadān also brought about an outstanding socio-cultural change in Kashmir. He motivated many of his associates, who were scholars, artists, physicians, craftsmen and economists, to settle permanently in Kashmir. The people of Kashmir learnt a lot from them. They introduced new means of employment to Kashmiri people, like shawl weaving, pashmina weaving, silk embroidery, wood carving, calligraphy, carpentry, carpet weaving, cardboard making, pottery, paper mache and advanced architecture. Shāh-e-Hamadān not only introduced the people to the religion of Islam but also provided them an economic package which automatically empowered them. Shāh-e-Hamadān, through his associates, established schools, healthcare centres and skill centres in the remotest areas of the valley. Due to these selfless services that he rendered to the people of Kashmir, he is

known as 'Mohsin I Kashmir', i.e., the benefactor of Kashmir.

Shāh-e-Hamadān left deep imprints on almost every aspect of life in Kashmir, be it polity, economy, arts, crafts, architecture, religion or spirituality; he transformed and reshaped the destiny of Kashmir. He freed the people of Kashmir from polytheistic and antisocial practices and introduced the comprehensive concept of Oneness of God (Tawhid).

Shāh-e-Hamadān was blessed with outstanding spiritual powers. His magnetic personality and spiritual aura would attract the people from all the sections of the society. A large number of devotees would always gather around him.

Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes in his book *'Islam in Kashmir'*,

“He was a dedicated missionary who was neither deterred by the unfavourable political circumstances of Kashmir nor by his old age. Syed Ali Hamadani was such a committed missionary of Islam that he undertook the missionary journey of Kashmir at the ripe age of seventy-two, trekking through the difficult and inhospitable terrain, and he left the valley after completing his mission even though the Sultan of the

time had requested him to take up his abode in Kashmir.”(19)

Khanqah I Moallah

At the place where Shāh-e-Hamadān used to offer five congregational prayers on the banks of the river Jhelum in Srinagar, a Khanqah was constructed which became a centre of spirituality. This Khanqah, which is a beautiful model of wood architecture, still exists with its grandeur. This historical place is mentioned by Abul Fazl in 'Aain-e-Akbari' and by the Mughal emperor Jahangir in '*Tuzak-e-Jahangiri*'.

Khanqah Moalla is located in the heart of Srinagar on the eastern bank of the Jhelum River with its unique grandeur for the past several centuries. According to Shāh-e-Hamadān's son, Mir Muhammad Hamadani, this place was chosen by his father on the instructions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Shāh-e-Hamadān used to offer five time prayers at this place (20) and the people from all parts of Kashmir used to meet him there. Later it became a place of worship for Kashmiri Muslims as well as Kashmiri Brahmins, and everyone, irrespective of caste, creed and colour, would get spiritual benefits from it. After Shāh-e-Hamadān's death, this place became a public place of worship. It was transformed into a great Khanqah when Mir Muhammad Hamadani,



son of Shāh-e-Hamadān, visited Kashmir and took the initiative to build this Khanqah with the help of Sultan Sikandar and the Kashmiri Muslims, and the construction work of this Khanqah was completed in 799 AH. It is mentioned that the Patron Saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (Nund Reshi), also participated in this construction. In order to take care of the expenses of the Khanqah permanently, Mir Muhammad Hamadani acquired three villages as a waqf jagir in exchange for a rare gem of Badakhshan. The Waqfnama of this deed has been preserved. There is an almirah in the Khanqah containing some holy relics, a pillar of the Prophet's tent and his holy flag, which Shāh-e-Hamadān acquired from Sheikh Muhammad Azqani. People throng in large numbers at this place for getting spiritual blessings.

Gulzar Mufti writes, "It is not only a place of worship for Kashmiris but also represents more than six hundred years of our heritage." (21)

Demise

In 1387, during his third and last visit to Kashmir, he had to leave early on account of ill health. In Pakhli, he was received as a royal guest by the ruler Sultan Muhammad Khidhr Shah. While at Kunar (located at the present-day border area between Pakistan and

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Afghanistan), he fell seriously ill and passed away at the age of 71 on 6th Zul Hijjah 786 AH / 19 January 1387 AD.

چو شد از گاه احمد خاتم دین
ز هجرت هفتصد و ست و ثمانین
برقت از عالم فانی به باقی
امیر هر دو عالم آل یسین

In the year 786 from the time of Ahmad (ﷺ), the last of the prophets (that is), from the Hijra,

*There went from the transitory to the eternal world the prince of both the worlds, the descendent of Yasin (ﷺ).
(22)*

During this illness, he advised his disciples about some very important things. He advised them to be content, especially in the matter of food and clothing, and be content with the pleasure of God. However, in the matter of knowledge, one should not be satisfied. The rebellious evil desires should not be followed. He emphasised the importance of dhikr, i.e., the remembrance of God. He encouraged the disciples to construct mosques for the worship of God. He emphasised avoiding oppression, adultery, lies, deceit, and backbiting completely.

The Last Will

On the night of 6th Zul Hijjah after the Isha prayers, Shāh-e-Hamadān summoned all his disciples and declared his last will in these words,

“Always stay with the truth; that is, stay steadfast on the path of truth and be steadfast in reciting the Awwad (the remembrances). Remember me and forgive me. If you can remain steadfast in loyalty, then stay at my mashhad (place of religious visitation), for a complete year. And keep reciting the Awwad (the remembrances); follow these advices so that you may attain happiness in this world and in the hereafter. If you adopt any other course of action apart from this, you will be responsible for it yourself... God bless you. Go and offer prayers.”

The last words on his lips were, "*Ya Allahu, Ya Rafeequ, Ya Habeebu*" (O Allah, O Friend, O Beloved), then he recited "Bismillah i Rahman i Raheem" (In the name of Allah, the most affectionate, the merciful). Interestingly, the total value of "Bismillah i Rahman i Raheem" in the Abjad number system is 786, which happens to be the year of his death as per the Hijri calendar. In the mehrab of Khanqah-i-Moalla, this quatrain is inscribed,

حضرت شاه ہمدانؒ کریم
 آیہ رحمت ز کلام قدیم
 گفت دم آخر و تاریخ شد
 بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

His followers and devotees, under the guidance of Sheikh Qawwam-ud-Din Badakhshi, brought his body from Pakhli to present-day Khatlan, a province of Tajikistan. All the way a piece of cloud overshadowed the caravan. The caravan reached Kolab after five months and nineteen days. For so long, the blessed corpse remained immutable, and it smelt like musk. The blessed body was buried at Kolab, Tajikistan, and a tomb was constructed at the place, which is still visited by the lovers of Shāh-e-Hamadān. (23)

Rumi has rightly said,

"When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men."

The Spiritual Lineage (Shajra-e-Tariqat)

The spiritual lineage of Shāh-e-Hamadān in Kubravi Sufi order goes back to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) through his spiritual guide Sheikh Mehmud Mazdqani. The complete Shajra-e-Tariqat is as under,



The Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)→ Syedina Ali Bin Abi Talib→ Sheikh Hasan Basri→ Sheikh Habib Ajmi→ Sheikh Dawood Tayi→ Sheikh Maroof Karkhi→ Sheikh Siri Saqati→ Sheikh Junayd Baghdadi→ Sheikh Abu Bakar Shibli→ Sheikh Abu Ali Misri→ Sheikh Ali Rudbari→ Sheikh Abu Uthman Maghribi→ Sheikh Abul Qasim Jurjani→ Sheikh Abu Bakar Nassaj→ Sheikh Ahmad Ghazali→ Sheikh Abu Najeeb Suhrawardi→ Sheikh Ammar Yasir→ Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra→ Sheikh Majduddin Baghdadi→ Sheikh Ali Bin Lala Ghaznawi→ Sheikh Ahmad Zakir Jozjani→ Sheikh Abdul-Rehman Isfaraini→ Sheikh Allaud Daula Simnani→ Sheikh Mehmud Mazdqani→ Shāh-e-Hamadān Amir Kabir Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Children

The historians mention a daughter and a son as the descendants of Shāh-e-Hamadān. The daughter was married to his beloved disciple and spiritual successor, Khawaja Ishaq Khatlani. The details about her are shrouded under a thick cloud of anonymity. The name of his son is Mir Syed Mohammad Hamadāni (1372-1450), who turned out to be his perfect successor in every respect and played a great role in carrying forward the legacy of his father. He played key role in the institutionalization of Islam in Kashmir. He was born in

1372 AD/774 AH. According to Khulasat-ul-Manaqib, one day Mir Syed Ali Hamadani described his dream before his disciples saying,

“[In dream], Sheikh Mehmood Muzdqani gave me a falcon and told me that God has given you this as a blessed gift. I asked, “What should I do with it?” He said that put it inside your khanqah, it will reside there. I saw a huge number of saints with the Sheikh offering blessings to it. From this dream, I have got a hint that I will be blessed with a pious son.” (24)

He was just 12 at the death of his father. Before his death, Shāh-e-Hamadān had already left two writings (Khilafatnama and Wasiyatnama) as his last will for his son, which was handed over to Khawaja Ishaq, who delivered the documents to Mir Muhammad with the exception of the Khilafat Nama, the document conveying succession, which the former retained himself, saying that it would only be given to him once he proves himself worthy of it. This was apparently a hint for Mir Muhammad Hamadāni that he should exert himself to follow in the footsteps of his father.

Mir Muhammad Hamadāni was raised under the guidance of Khwaja Ishaq Khatlani and Nooruddin Jafar Badakhshi. Shāh-e-Hamadān had put his son under the tutelage and guidance of Khwaja Ishaq Khatlani from



whom Mir Muhammad Hamadāni learnt for two years. Mir Muhammad Hamadāni soon attained eminence as a scholar and saint. When only 22 years of age, he visited Kashmir with 300 companions and stayed there for 22 years (12 years according to Dr Shams-ud-Din Ahmad) and proved to be the second great benefactor for the people of Kashmir after Shāh-e-Hamadān. He proved to be a worthy successor of his father and, with the help of his comrades, built many important mosques and khanqahs. Just after his arrival in Kashmir Mir Muhammad Hamadani started his father's mission with the same methodology of his father that "the common people imitate the behavior and culture of their rulers" so he gave first preference to winning over sultan, his nobles and masses of the capital city, then with the passage of time, he visited all the corners of Kashmir and interacted with every section of society. The influence of Syed Muhammad Hamadani on the Sultan Sikander and his nobles can easily be understood from the famous medieval chronicle Jonaraja's Rajatarangini in these words:

"...As is moon among the stars, so was Muhammad [Mir Muhammad Hamadani] of mirs country among the Yavanas [Muslim]. Although a boy, he was their leader because of his learning. The king [Sultan Sikander] waited on him daily humble as a servant and like a student he daily took lessons from him [Mir

Muhammad Hamadani]” (25)

Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes,

“...the most important development of the reign of the Sultan [Sikander] was the conversions to Islam of a great number of people including many Brahmans and the Prime Minister and commander in chief of the Sultan. On account of the conversion of a large population including the ruling class, it became possible to Islamize the state craft, which was one of the main concerns of Mir Muhammad Hamadani” (26)

The famous 'Khanqah I Muallah' in Srinagar was constructed under his guidance in 1395. In order to meet the expenses of this Khanqah, he got three villages from Sultan Sikandar in exchange for a rare diamond of Badakhshan. He also built the khanqahs at Tral and Sopore. The historical Jama Masjid of Srinagar was also constructed by his efforts. The mosque was commissioned by Sultan Sikandar in 1394 and completed in 1402, at the behest of Mir Muhammad Hamadani. The land for the Eidgah in Srinagar, where thousands of people offer Eid prayers, was also bought by Mir Muhammad from its owners, and then the land was dedicated to the Muslim community. He also bought land for Malkhah graveyard in Srinagar and dedicated it to the Muslims of Kashmir.



According to local historians, Mir Muhammad Hamadāni had also given a letter of spiritual accreditation (Khat I Irshad) to the greatest Reshi of Kashmir, i.e., Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (1377-1438). Mir Muhammad brought the local Reshi movement closer to Islamic Sufism and purified it from monastic tendencies. Another important contribution of Mir Muhammad Hamadani to Kashmir was his interaction with the native mystics of Kashmir called Rishis. Mir Muhammad was greatly impressed by their piety, simplicity, knowledge and spirituality especially of their Patron Sheikh Noor-ud- Din (known in Kashmir with beloved epithets of Nund Rishi, Alamdar-I-Kashmir and Shaikh-ul-Alam). Mir Muhammad Hamadani interacted with Sheikh Noor-ud-Din in 814 A.H. He was so much impressed by his spiritual state that, he gave Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, Khat-i-Irshad. In the contents of this Khat-i-Irshad, Mir Muhammad addressed Sheikh Noor-ud-Din in these words:

“...my brother Nuruddin Rishi Kashmiri who is pious, gnostic, man gifted with kashf, mujahidah and mushahida and is also a *zahid* and *abid*. May Allah guide him like salihin and arifin and shower on him His grace like those who are perfect in piety and nearest to Allah. He not only insisted on his entry into the circle of Allah's lovers and perfectly pious souls but implored for it with



every fiber of his being. Hence, I granted him permission to make seekers (after the Truth) resentful and take allegiance from them and may guide and train those seeking guidance in the path.” (27)

A copy of the same Khat-i-Irshad has been preserved in the Khanqah-i-Muallah. Mir Muhammad recognized localized Rishi order of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din as part and parcel of Kubrawi Sufi order and merged it with traditional Islamic Sufism.

Sultan Sikandar had a great respect for him, and a good number of people accepted Islam at the hands of Mir Muhammad. He institutionalised the real essence of Islam in Kashmir by constructing Khanqahs, mosques, schools and skill-learning centres in different parts of the valley. Although the ruler had a great regard for him but he didn't interfere in the matters of the state.

Mir Muhammad Hamadani married twice in Kashmir. First, he married Taj Khatoon, the daughter of Syed Hasan Bahadur who died just after five years of marriage. She is buried at Malik Angan Mohala. Then, he married to Bibi Bariya, the daughter of the adviser and chief minister of Sultan Sikandar, Suha Bhat. In fact, Suha Bhat had accepted Islam at the hands of Mir Muhammad Hamadani. Bibi Bariya also didn't live for too long and on death was buried in Budgam district. A

shrine has been constructed on her grave at Kralapora on the Srinagar-Chrari Sharief Road where people throng to pay homage to her. She is locally known as Ded Mouji.

After spending 22 fruitful years in Kashmir, Mir Muhammad Hamadāni left for Haj in 1405, and from there he returned to his homeland in Khatlan and lived there for 45 years. The details about this period are largely unknown and in 1450 AD, he died and was buried beside his father, Shāh-e-Hamadān, in Kolab, Tajikistan.

Mir Muhammad Hamadāni, following the pattern of his father, has written many booklets on spirituality and religion. Muhammad Shafi Bhat, while referring to various sources in his paper, “Mir Muhammad Hamadani and his Contribution”, writes,

“It is reported that Mir Muhammad Hamadani had written about 45 books and Rasail on different religious sciences and most of them are extinct now because unfortunately they have not been preserved in Kashmir. The author of Waqiat-e-Kashmir, Muhammad Azam Didamari gives some valuable information about two works of Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani- he mentions that Mir Muhammad Hamadani wrote a book on Tasawuf for Sultan Sikander and another one on logic. The latter one (Sharh-i-shamah), written on logic is



actually on account of his serious intellectual discussions with Syed Muhammad Hisari, the former one, Jami- al- ulum wa Qami al Zunan has of late been identified in Tashkent by Shams-uddin Ahmad and more so identified and consulted by Farooq Bukhari in Nadwat-al-ulama in Lucknow. About the latter one, Sharah –i-shamih, it is also mentioned that it is actually the commentary of the Sayyid on Al-Shimah, the famous treatise on logic by Katibi Qazwani. Mir Muhammad also wrote a treatise on Tasawuf for Sultan Sikander and named it ArRisalat-al-Sikandariya although the treatise is now extinct but it was available and consulted up to the Mughal rule in Kashmir, in the works of famous Sufis and hagiographers of later medieval times we find several references of his books as they have consulted his books and they were highly impressed by the scholarship of Mir Muhammad Hamadani.” (28)

The Eminent Spiritual Guides of Shāh-e-Hamadān

Shāh-e-Hamadān attained knowledge and spiritual blessings from many great teachers of his time. The names of some of his teachers are:

1. Sheikh Syed Alauddin
2. Sheikh Alau Daula Simnani



Most of the chroniclers and writers have got confused due to the resemblance of the names, as they consider Syed Alauddin and Ala-ud-Daula Simnani to be the same individuals, which according to the research of Yaqub Muhammad Barahvi and Shamsudin Ahmad is not the case. (29) Syed Alaudin was the maternal uncle of Syed Ali Hamadani whereas Alau Daula Simnani is the great Sufi Sheikh who has written many notable books like Matla-ul-Nuqat Wa Majma-u-Luqat, Sirr-ul-Baal fi Atwar-I Suluk Ahl-ul-Baal, Sulwat-ul-Ashiqueen, Al Urwah Li Ahli Khalwah wa Al-Jalwah etc. From the former Syed Ali Hamadani learnt the basics of religion and spirituality whereas from the later he acquired the qualities of writing books, travelling abroad, preaching the Islamic values and composing poetry. Syed Ali was 22 at the death of Alau Daula Simnani and he benefitted a lot from him. He was proud of his association with the Sheikh.

Alau Daula Simnani was a hardcore critic of Ibn Arabi's Wahdat-ul-Wujud but Syed Ali Hamadani, despite having full regards for him, supported Ibn Arabi and even wrote two commentaries on his *Fusus Al Hikam*. On this issue, he adopted a different path and held Ibn Arabi in high esteem throughout his life. Alau Daula Simnani had such a great command on the science of Hadith (usool-il-Hadith) that famous

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muhaddith Ibn Hajar Asqlani in his *Al Durar Al-Kamina* considers him an excellent muhaddith of his time.(30)

3. Sheikh Taqi-ud-Din Ali Dosti
4. Sheikh Mahmud Mazdqani
5. Sheikh Hafiz Muhsin
6. Sheikh Hussain
7. Sheikh Jibril Kurdi
8. Sheikh Khalid
9. Sheikh Abu Bakr Tusi
10. Sheikh Nizamuddin
11. Sheikh Musharraf ud Din
12. Sheikh Athir-ud-din
13. Sheikh Najmuddin Hamadāni
14. Sheikh Muhammad Murshid
15. Sheikh Abdullah Misri
16. Sheikh Ali Misri
17. Sheikh Awad Ulaf



18. Sheikh Murad Gardezi
19. Shaikh Umar Marqani
20. Sheikh Abu Bakr
21. Sheikh Abu Harma
22. Sheikh Bahauddin
23. Sheikh Izz al-Din Hatayi
24. Sheikh Burhanuddin
25. Sheikh Sharafuddin Sabzi
26. Sheikh Sagharji
27. Sheikh Zain-ul-Abidin Muhammad Maghribi
28. Sheikh Abu Al-Qasim
29. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Majzoob
30. Sheikh Muhammad Mahmood Majzoob
31. Sheikh Hussain bin Muslim
32. Sheikh Abu Al-Farah Tartusi
33. Sheikh Saeed Habshi
34. Sheikh Umer



The Eminent Disciples of Shāh-e-Hamadān

Numerous seekers of the Divine path benefitted from Shāh-e-Hamadān. He had a huge number of followers who would gather around him. Some of them are.

1. Mir Syed Hussain Samnani: He was the cousin of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni
2. Syed Tajuddin: He was the elder brother of Syed Hussain Samnani
3. Syed Jamal-ud-Din Muhaddith: He was the uncle of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni
4. Syed Kamal-ud-Din Thani: He was also the uncle of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni
5. Khwaja Ishaq Khatlani: He was the authorized spiritual successor Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni. Shāh-e-Hamadān also married his only daughter to him. It is necessary to mention here that the greats like Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi, Sheikh Muhammad Masoom, Shah Waliullah Dehlvi benefitted from his spiritual successors.
6. Syed Kamal-ud-Din
7. Syed Muhammad Qadri
8. Syed Jalaluddin Atayi



9. Syed Feroz Al-Mashhoor
10. Syed Fakhr-ud-Din
11. Syed Bahauddin
12. Syed Muhammad Kabir Bayhaqi
13. Sheikh Sulaiman
14. Haji Hafiz Muhammad
15. Shaykh Qawwam-ud-Din Badakhshi
16. Syed Muhammad Kazim: He was the caretaker of the library of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni
17. Sheikh Muhammad Qureshi
18. Mir Syed Ashraf Samnani
19. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Jafar Badakhshi: Khulasat al-Manaqib is his famous work in which he has written down in detail the life and works of Shāh-e-Hamadān. The book is available and Dr Shams-ud-Din Ahmad has translated it in Urdu.
20. Makhdum Abdul Rashid Haqqani

The Works

PNK Bamzai writes, "Syed Ali Hamadāni was a versatile genius, a great saint and a scholar. He wrote profusely on



Sufism and elucidated several earlier works on the subject. Although a great authority on theology and philosophy, he did not disdain to write on such varied secular subjects as jurisprudence, political science, and the science of physiognomy. Author of more than a hundred works on logic, ethics and other subjects in prose, Syed Ali also wrote Persian poetry of no mean order. His odes are naturally Sufistic, and his mystical poems illustrate his broad humanistic outlook on life and religion."(31)

According to his biographers, Shāh-e-Hamadān wrote more than 170 books on the themes of the fundamentals of Islam, the virtues of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), the Ahl al Bayat (the close relatives of the Prophet), the companions of the Prophet, Islamic ethics, the terms and concepts of Sufism and the socio-political ethos of Islam. Some of his books were so popular that during the Mughal period, they were included in the syllabus.

Dr. Mohammad Ishaq of Dhaka University in his dissertation titled as *India's Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature* writes,

“Hadith (corpus of the sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) was first brought to Kashmir by Syed Amir-i-Kabir Ali Bin Shihab al-Hamadani, an



itinerant Darwish of Khurasan, who entered the territory in 773/1371 with a retinue of seven hundred followers. He was a great success as a missionary in Kashmir where he and his disciples were mainly responsible for the expansion of Islam. So great was his influence over there that Sultan Qutb-al-Din, the ruler of Kashmir, took pride in accepting his discipleship.” (32)

He introduced the teachings of Quran and Hadith in an age dominated by jurisprudential (fiqh) and logical (mantiq) discussions. Through the books like, Sabeen, Arbayyeen, Zikriyyah, Rawdhat-ul-Firdous, Al-Awradiyya, Zakhirat-ul-Muluk etc, he presented thousands of ahadith with lucid translations and elucidations in Persian language. These works were circulated in academic and spiritual circles of the time. The books like Al-Nasikh Wa Al-Mansukh fi-Al Quran Al-Majid, Tafsir al-Huruf al-Muajam, Sharah Asma-ul-Husna etc, contain considerable material regarding Quranic sciences. Most of the books of Shāh-e-Hamadān are on Tasawwuf (Islamic Sufism). He takes a great influence from the greats like, Imam Ghazali, Najmuddin Kubra, Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, Abu Najib Suhrawardi, Ibn Arabi and profusely quotes them in dozens of his booklets. He has written two commentaries on Ibn Arabi's Fusus Al Hikam in Persian

and Arabic. Dr Farooq Bukhari quoting Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, writes,

“ The ideas of the Sheikh [Ibn Arabi] first reached India through Hazrat Amir [Syed Ali Hamadani]” (33)

Like other Sufi masters, Shāh-e-Hamadān substantiates his teachings with references from the Quran and the sayings of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). He usually avoids entering into controversial discussions and draws morals from different traditions. His works are deeply influenced by Imam Ghazali, and he often quotes from his insightful works.

The researchers have not been able to trace all the books written by Shāh-e-Hamadān. Most of his works are short treatises on religion and spirituality. Shāh-e-Hamadān emulated the writing style of Abul Qasim Qushayri (the author of *Risala Qushayria*), focusing on the fundamental truths and avoiding unnecessary details. Most of his books are in the Persian language, while others are in Arabic. The manuscripts of many of his books are available in the British Museum London, India Office Library, Kashmir, Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Tehran, Tashkent, Tajikistan, Punjab University Library, Bahawalpur, Asiatic Society Bengal and Mysore. According to Ghulam Hasan Hasnu, his 25 books have been published so far.



Many of his works are being retrieved, edited and translated in different parts of the world. Syed Abdul Hai in his book *Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir* mentions 41 books of Shāh-e-Hamadān that he had read himself. The main scholars who have done significant research on his life and works are Sydah Ashraf Zafar, Dr Muhammad Riyaz, Dr Shamsuddin Ahmad, Dr Abdul Qudus Khan and Ghulam Hasan Hasnu. The latter has done commendable work by translating dozens of his books into Urdu and has published “*Majmoa-e-Rasail-i-Shāh-e-Hamadān*” in two volumes. My edited book '*Kashmir Mayn Islāmī Inqilāb Aur Ḥaḍrat Shah-i Hamadan*', published in 2021, is a collection of research articles and papers on the subject. The main focus has been to cover all important aspects of Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani.

Some of his important books are:

1. *Aurad-e-Fathiya*: *Aurad-e-Fathiya* is the most popular work of Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni. It is loved by the people so much that hundreds of people across Kashmir learn it by heart. It was a special gift provided to the people of Kashmir by Shāh-e-Hamadān. It is recited on a daily basis, especially after Fajr prayers with great devotion in most of the mosques and Khanqahs of the valley. The book is equally popular in Ladakh, Gilgit and Baltistan. The people find an incredible spiritual solace



in its recitation at different occasions. The devotees have found countless spiritual benefits of the book. The book is a fine blend of thought-provoking prose and mesmerising poetry in the Arabic language. The book can loosely be divided into three parts; the first section consists of heartwarming hymns in the praise of the Almighty, the second part comprises devotional salutations to the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), and the third and last part concludes the 'Awrad' with Dua al-Riqaab, i.e., the supplications and prayers for wellbeing in both worlds.

Most of the praises, salutations and supplications are taken from the Quran and Hadith. The book consists of aphoristic praises of Almighty Allah in such a sublime and soul-soothing manner that people are often moved to tears by its recitation. The Sufis from almost all the orders have equally paid homage to it. "Aurad-e-Fathiya" reflects Shāh-e-Hamadān 's firm belief in the Oneness of God.

"Aurad-e-Fathiya" is a source of the fear of God, the basic tenets of Islamic faith, trust in God, self-purification, observance of the rulings of Shari'ah, adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and submission to the creator and sustainer of this world. It is a fine method of remembering God. It

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reiterates to follow the basic tenets of the creed of Ahlu-s-Sunnah.

Basically, the title "Aurad-e-Fathiya" is the combination of two Arabic words: 'Awrad', the plural of 'wird', which means some special supplications and litanies that are recited on a daily basis by disciples under the guidance and supervision of the spiritual guides (Murshid); and 'Fathiyya', which means to open or to achieve spiritual success. Thus, "Aurad-e-Fathiya" means the oft-repeated spiritual supplications and litanies in order to open the doors of success in both worlds.

One of the greatest scholars and mystics of the subcontinent, Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlavi, has praised the merits of this book in these words:

"These remembrances were compiled by the perfect researcher of the mysteries of God, Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, as relics from 1400 great Sufi saints. Every one of them attained spiritual heights by the recitation of a particular word. Hence, whosoever recites these divine words will take his spiritual share from those 1400 spiritual masters in the form of spiritual blessings. It will take too long if the merits and benefits of this "Awrad" are mentioned, as the Sheikh (Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni) travelled the world thrice [to compile this Awrad]. It is

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reported from (Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni),

"When I visited the Ka'bah for the twelfth time and after that reached Al-Aqsa Mosque, I had a dream that all these dervishes were approaching towards me, and I got up, stepped forward and greeted all of them. I saw Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) taking out something from his blessed hand and said to me, "Take this 'Fathiya'." When I took it from the blessed hand of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and looked at it, these were the remembrances that I had compiled. Thus, due to this spiritual indication, it was named 'Awrad Al Fathiya'" (34)

"Du'a-e-Riqab" is a selection of supplications appended with the Awrad. The word 'Riqab' is the plural of 'Raqaba', which means neck and slave. Since man is the slave of his creator, Allah. A slave has no status and will of his own; he surrenders his will to his master. A slave possesses nothing, and whatever he gets is a gift from his master.

Since, in "Du'a-e-Riqab", the supplicant presents himself as a slave before the master of the universe and begs for His mercy. He asks for his wellbeing in both worlds, and he is not returned empty-handed.

"Aurad-e-Fathiya" has been widely published in

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different countries of the world, like India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Tajikistan and some Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia. In Kashmir, "Aurad-e-Fathiya" can easily be found in any bookshop. In fact, its copies can be found in abundance in most of the mosques and Khanqahs where it is regularly recited after the early morning (fajr) prayers.

Moreover, "Aurad-e-Fathiya" has widely been translated into many notable languages like Urdu, English, Persian, Turkish, Kashmiri, Tajik, etc. Among others, it has been translated into English by Ghulam Hassan Khan, Professor Syed Mohiuddin Habib and Dr Gulzar Mufti.

Many commentaries have been written on the book by scholars like Allama Qasim Shah Bukhari, Hakeem Gulam Nabi, Maulana Abdul Kabir Kashmiri, Asadullah Shah Dwarki, Maulana Asadullah Misbahi, Shafqat Rasool Beigh, etc.

2. Zakhirat-ul-Muluk (The Treasure of Kings): Zakhirat-ul-Muluk is his magnum opus on political science & ethics & contains his ideas on government and the duties of subjects and rulers. This book is written in the Persian language and is very popular in academic circles. It provides good counsel to the ruling class in light of Islamic teachings. It gives an idea of how serious



Hamadāni was in the establishment of an Islamic system of governance in different parts of the world. It comprehensively throws light on the etiquette of the government, the responsibilities of the administration, the limits of the legislature and the duties of the judiciary in Muslim society. These etiquettes are substantiated by the references from the Holy Quran, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the anecdotes from the four Caliphs of Islam. *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk* has an outstanding contemporary relevance as it provides a complete blueprint of an ideal Islamic welfare state with a strong socio-political foundation. The book has been translated into English, Urdu, Kashmiri, Turkish, Latin and French. The book consists of ten chapters; the sixth chapter seems to be more insightful. Mulla Jivan in *Tafsir Ahmadi*, Mulla Hussain Waiz Kashifi in *Akhlaq-i-Mohsina*, and Allama Kafavi in *Ilam-ul-Akhyar* have highly praised this book. In fact, Allama Iqbal writes in a letter to Munshi Muhammad Din Fawq about the merits of this book. The book has been translated into English by Mohammad Umar Farooq as his thesis for a Ph.D. from the University of Kashmir.

3. *Chihil Israr* (The Forty Secrets): This is a collection of 40 mystical odes (ghazals). In these mystical ghazals, he expresses the spiritual upheavals of



a lover of the divine beauty. This book has been translated into English and Urdu by Prof. Munawar Masudi from Srinagar.

4. Maktubat-i-Ameeriya: This treatise consists of 22 letters of Shāh-e-Hamadān addressed to the rulers of his time and to some of his disciples. These letters have been translated into English by Prof. Abdul Qayoom Rafiqui from Srinagar.

5. Risala-e- Munamiyah: It discusses the topics like the reality of idea and its kinds, the dreams and its implications among various other philosophical themes.

6. Risala Bahram Shahiya: It illustrates the point that God has ordained a never-ending physical and spiritual travel upon human beings on the earth. The journey is extremely daring but most of the people are unaware of its dangers.

7. Risala Darwishiya: It discusses the essence of humanity and states that the prophets were sent to diagnose and cure the spiritual ailments of the human soul. This very task was assigned to the scholars and saints of the Ummah.

8. Risala Aqliyya: It discusses the virtues and attributes of the human intellect. It puts forth the case of



human superiority on the rest of the creation on the basis of the intellect. The intellect should be subservient to the institution of the divine revelation for the guidance.

9. Zikriyya: This treatise is on the importance of dhikr i.e., the remembrance of God, its merits, types and etiquettes in Kabrawiyyah Sufi order.

10. Dawoodiya: It describes the virtues of the visions and remembrances of the Gnostics.

11. Mauchilka: This treatise was written at a place called Mauchilka. It urges to observe the difference between the outward and the inward states of Sufi, and to ponder over the creation of God.

12. Maqamiya: It deals with the reality of dreams illustrated with interesting examples from the lives of the Sufi saints. It also shows the difference between the dreams of the pious and the wicked.

13. Aetiqaadiya: This concise treatise deals with the basic tenets of Islamic faith. The pillars of Islam have been discussed in a lucid style and some important jurisprudential issues have been discussed in the light of the Islamic tradition.

14. Faqriyah: This is basically the will that Shāh-e-

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Hamadān penned down for the ruler Khizr Shah on his deathbed.

15. Nooriya: It discusses the reality of the divine light.

16. Waridat-i-Amiriyya: This treatise contains the mystical visions, contemplations and the inner feelings of Shāh-e-Hamadān.

17. Maqamat-e-Sufiya: This treatise is on the subject of soul and Nafs.

18. Dah Qayidah: This is an illuminating translation of Shaykh Najmuddin Al-Kubra's Arabic treatise 'Risala Al-Asool Al-Ashara' in Persian language. The translation is profusely beautiful and provides rules for living a virtuous life.

19. Mustalahat-i-Sufiyya: It contains the simplistic explanations of three hundred terms of Islamic Sufism.

20. Asrar-ul-Nuqta: It contains a mystical discussion on the Oneness of God and His divine attributes.

21. Al Muwaddat-Al-Qurba: It contains the merits and virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt i.e., the blessed family of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him)

22. Fatwatnamah: This treatise revolves around the philosophy of "Futuwwat" i.e., virility or gallantry. It is a



creed or trend in Sufism usually ascribed to Hazrat Ali (May Allah be pleased with him), and it was fully adopted by the Sufis of the Kubrawiyyah order. It emphasizes the virtues of selfless social service as an essential part of a Sufi's character. In "Futuwwat", a Sufi has to dedicate his life for the service of the mankind and has to show generosity, humility and mercy in social interactions with the people.

23. Munajaat: This is a collection of some heartfelt prayers and supplications of Shāh-e-Hamadān.

24. Rawdhat-ul-Firdous: It contains 2,050 Ahadith i.e., sayings of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) on the noble ethics and etiquettes.

25. Khawatiriya: It contains the description of Satanic deceptions and the ways of combating them.

26. Al Insan-ul-Kamil: It discusses the position of "The Perfect Man" in the light of the Sufi concept of 'Wahdat-ul-Wujood' i.e., the unity of being.

27. Al-Nasikh wa Al-Mansukh fil Quran-il-Majid: This treatise is on the topic of abrogation of some verses of the Quran by Quran itself at some places.

28. Fi Sawad-il-Lail wa lubisa-al-Aswad: It contains



the sayings of some Sufi masters on the merits of putting on the robes of black colour.

29. Muash-ul-Salikeen: This treatise is on the subject of earning halal (permissible) livelihood by the Sufis so that they are financially self-sufficient.

30. Aqrab-ul-Tareeq Iz lam Yujad-il-Rafeeq: It deals with the merits of travel and tranquility and the benefits in visiting spiritual places.

31. Hal-ul-Fusus: This is an abridgement of "Fusus Al-Hikam", the well-known book written by Sheikh Ibn Arabi on the reality of the divine truths. The book is written in an idiosyncratic style and discusses the unity of God, His divine attributes, the reality of the world and the discourses on the ways of the Prophets.

32. Sharah Asma-ul-Husna: It is a lucid commentary on the 99 names of Allah in the light of the verses from the Holy Qur'an, the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the sayings of the saints.

33. Insan Nama: This treatise deals with ilm Al-Qiyafa i.e., face-reading.

34. Aadab-i-Sufra: This treatise contains one hundred eighteen etiquettes of eating.

35. Manazil al-Salikeen: This treatise gives the details



and conditions of the people who have set out to travel on the path of truth.

36. Minhaj-ul-Arifin (The Way of the Gnostics): The treatise contains 182 aphoristic advises to the seekers of the truth.

37. Fi Ulama-i-Din: This treatise is in the condemnation of the deviant and materialistic scholars of Islam. Shāh-e-Hamadān also criticizes the ruling class as well.

38. Faqiriyya: The Sufi concept of 'faqr' and it's merits are elucidated in this treatise in the light of Quran, Sunnah and the sayings of great Sufis.

39. Talqania: This booklet was written in Talqan, a place in Tajikistan and it is written on the reality of Sufism.

40. Sawalaat: This treatise answers ten important questions on Ilm-al-Kalam. Most of the questions are on the attributes of the Divine and on the creation of the universe.

41. Sifat-ul-Fuqara: This treatise is based on one of the most eloquent sermons of Shāh-e-Hamadān on the reality of mysticism.

42. Tafsir al-Huruf al-Muajam: The meaning of the Arabic alphabets have been explained in this booklet.



43. Muradat-i- Diwan-e-Hafiz: In this treatise, there is a mystical explanation of some key terms of Diwan-e-Hafiz written by Hafiz Sherazi.

44. Taifa Ha-e-Mardam: This treatise discusses the different natures of God's creatures and the wisdom behind their creation.

45. Talqeeniya: The theme of this treatise is the harmony between Shari'ah and Tareeqah.

46. Aqabat: This treatise was written to motivate the ruler of Kashmir, Qutb-ud-Din to work for the establishment of Islamic system of governance. Shāh-e-Hamadān points out certain difficult valleys through which he has to pass in order to be a just ruler.

47. Siyar-o-Sulook: It puts forth the etiquettes of travel and emphasizes the need of modification of behaviour for a traveller.

48. Chihil Maqam-e-Sufiya: In this treatise, Shāh-e-Hamadān illustrates forty essential spiritual stations of the Sufis.

49. Mashhiyyat: This booklet advises to observe patience in trials and tribulations; it also inculcates the values of gratitude and contentment in the Sufis.

50. Asnad-i-Huliyah: This treatise describes in



detail the physical attributes of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) which are a source of comfort for the lovers of the last messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

51. Makarim-ul-Akhlaq: This booklet revolves around the theme how to struggle against the evils of the 'nafs' i.e., animalistic desires. It also emphasizes the role of 'Murshid' ie., the spiritual guide, in the process of purification of the 'nafs'.

52. Fi Khawas-i- Ahl al-Batin: This booklet contains the characteristics of mystics who renounce the pleasures of life for acquiring spiritual knowledge.

53. Asrar-i-Roohi: This treatise contains the 'ahadith' which are related to the Ascension (M'eraaj) of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him)

54. Merat-ul-Tayibeen: This treatise was written at the request of Bahram Shah, the ruler of Balkh who was also a devotee of Shāh-e-Hamadān . It revolves around the importance of repentance, its conditions and prerequisites.

55. Kashf-al-Haqaiq: This treatise illustrates the secrets behind the knowledge of certainty and the efforts of the seekers of spiritual sagacity.



56. Gayat-ul-Makaan Fi Dirayat-ul-Zaman: This treatise discusses the metaphysical realms of time and space.

57. Masharib al-Azwaaq: This is the mystical commentary on Shaykh Ibn Al-Fariz's 'Qasida Al Khumriya Meemiya'.

58. Risala-e-Wujudiya: It discusses the mystical and philosophical concept of existence.

59. Risala Hifzan-i-Sehat: This treatise is on the importance of health and hygiene. It gives valuable suggestions for adopting a healthy lifestyle.

60. Hamadaniya: It discusses the literal and figurative meaning of the word 'hamadan'.

61. Al Nooriyya: It is about the merits of treading the religious path.

62. Aadab-ul-Murideen: It is the summary of the book originally written by Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra with the same name. It describes the etiquettes and manners that the disciples need to adopt in order to attain spiritual heights.

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The Legacy of Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

In this world, there have been few personalities who were able to transcend the limitations of their times and came up with some eternal stuff. Their legacy outlives their physical existence and continues to illuminate the lives of the people. Though centuries have passed, their contributions are still valid, and they keep on inspiring the people towards goodness. In the galaxy of these great personalities, Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni is still looked upon as a shining star in ample darkness. Even after seven hundred years, Shāh-e-Hamadān, by virtue of his multi-dimensional and balanced personality, continues to remain relevant to our times. The distinguishing feature of his personality is his multi-

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dimensional and moderate approach, which remains applicable for all times.

PNK Bamzai has rightly pointed out in his book, 'Culture and Political History of Kashmir',

"Syed Ali Hamadāni was a versatile genius, a great saint and a scholar. He wrote profusely on Sufism and elucidated several earlier works on the subject. Although a great authority on theology and philosophy, he did not disdain to write on such varied secular subjects as jurisprudence, political science, and the science of physiognomy. Author of more than a hundred works on logic, ethics and other subjects in prose, Syed Ali also wrote Persian poetry of no mean order. His odes are naturally Sufistic, and his mystical poems illustrate his broad humanistic outlook on life and religion." (1)

He visited Kashmir when there was socio-political chaos everywhere. Shāh-e-Hamadān brought about a great intellectual and cultural revolution. He not only resolved to build the society of Kashmir on the universal foundations of Islam but also started efforts for economic, political, social and cultural reformation. In the words of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan,

"Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni holds the position of the spiritual founder of Kashmir. The Muslims of Kashmir



generally call him Amir Kabir (the great leader). The present religious ideology of Kashmir is largely the result of his dawah efforts, for the people of Kashmir followed his mission to the fullest extent." (2)

There were so many areas in which he guided the Kashmiri people towards God-consciousness and harmony. God blessed him with a wide range of positive qualities, and he made great use of them in transforming the fate of Kashmir. Although it seems a herculean task to cover all the dimensions of his personality, here we shall try to explore some of them.

1. Multi-dimensional Personality: Shāh-e-Hamadān had a comprehensive and balanced personality. We find in him the incredible traits which are not found even in the great personalities of all times. He was a real polymath. He was a Sufi, an 'Aalim', a philosopher, a poet, an author, a reformer, a guide, a traveller and a visionary at the same time. On the one hand, he is heir to the mystical mysteries of the great Sufis like Ibn Arabi and Ghazali, and on the other hand, he is also connected with the scholarly heritage of the great Muhaddiths and jurists of Islamic tradition. He writes scholarly notes on Ibn Arabi and Al Ghazali, and also one of his teachers, Syed Alaudaula Simnani, is considered by Allama Ibn Hajar Asqalani to be a reliable Muhaddith (3).



In his mystical works such as Minhaj al-Arifeen, Zakhirat-ul-Muluk, Risala Darweshiya, Risala Aqliyyah, Maqamat i Sufiyyah, Hal al-Fusus, Maktubat, etc., we can see the influence of Ibn Arabi, Al Ghazali, Najmuddin Kubra, etc. In his scholarly works like Al-Nasikh wa Al-Mansukh fil Quran-il-Majid, Sharah Asma-ul-Husna, Zakhirat-ul-Muluk, Awrad-i-Fathiyya, etc., and Risala Aetiqaadiya, Risala Hifzaan-i-Sehet, etc., we can find the influences of the traditional ulema of the Ummah as well. In his poetry, we find the lyrical subtleties and thematic strands of the great poets of the calibre of Rumi, Jami and Saadi. At times, he also dives deep into the ocean of knowledge like Ibn Sina, Al Farabi and Al Razi and comes up with priceless gems of wisdom.

Writing about the 'myriad-mindedness' of Sufis, Muhammad Ashraf Wani, quoting from Zakhirat ul Muluk, has especially praised Shāh-e-Hamadān in his book 'Islam in Kashmir'.

“Besides being strict believers and ardent advocates of Zabti nafs and social justice, another aspect of Sufi missionaries that enhanced their prestige in the eyes of the public was their ilm (knowledge) – of both religious and secular sciences. Referring to the crucial prerequisites needed for one to earn faith and following

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among the people, Syed Ali Hamadani mainly underlines two conditions, viz., knowledge (ilm) and piety:

The more one is adorned with ilm (knowledge), waqar (modesty), and parhezgari (piety), the more one can captivate the hearts of the people.”

2. Worldview

Being a Sufi, Shāh-e-Hamadān 's main focus in life is God and His 'marifah' (gnosis). He works on his soul to be able to get liberated from materialistic propensities. He aims for a God-conscious life and takes Islam as the perfect code of life. He derives all his motivation from Islamic tradition and gives prominence to the Quran and Sunnah. He has a firm belief in life after death and hence seeks salvation through godliness. In his view, the greatest priority of a person should be the 'ibadah' and 'marifah' of God. However, he shows a great commitment to upholding social responsibilities as well. He motivates one and all to serve humanity without discriminating on the basis of caste, creed and colour. In his books, Shāh-e-Hamadān exhorts the readers to control mundane desires and reject pompous life. While dissuading the people from becoming the slaves of nafs, he says in Zakhirat ul Muluk,

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*“If the dog of nafs is under your control,
[Then] Believe, Paradise is yours;
This dog [nafs], but worse than a dog, is your enemy.
So don't be beguiled by its tricks.”*

Dua e Riqab , appended with his Aurad-e-Fathiya, beautifully summarises his worldview in these words addressed to God:

“O God! Keep us engaged in fulfilling your orders, keep us satisfied with your justice, keep us from despairing of your creatures, make us lovers of only You, keep us away from others, keep us satisfied with your judgements, make us patient with troubles from You, make us content with what You have given, keep us grateful for Your blessings, keep us happy with Your remembrance, and keep us with You by days and nights. May we be disinterested in this world and the lovers of the Hereafter, desirous of Your vision, drawn to Your presence and always ready for death.” (4)

“Syed Ali Hamadani holds man as a microcosm in whom are reflected all the attributes of the macrocosm. God has deposited in his heart the secrets or elements which are neither in “Arsh” (Throne), Farsh (Earth) nor Aasman (sky). Syed says that man is a small universe in his appearance, but in its actuality, reality and essence, he is the macrocosm (Jahan-i-Kabir).



To Syed Ali Hamadani, 'Saádah' is the end of man's life and the objects. But no end is an end in itself; it becomes a means for another end, for everything has some special purpose or end for which it is created. It is achieved; it renders happiness possible. Hamadani calls this end 'Saádah' or 'Saádat-i-ukhrawia. One can attain 'Saádah' by following the people who are on the right path. Moreover, one should spend his possessions in the way of God. It is very difficult to stand in the ranks of Sufis. But one should make his efforts to be in the rank of Ahl-i-Futuwat (people of magnanimity). If one does not do so, he will be amongst the people in loss... One should sit in the gathering of good ones to reach the goal or to attain 'Saádah'. (5)

3. Viewpoint on Islamic Sufism: According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, Sufism is not just the name of some customs and rituals associated with the saints and shrines; rather, it is all about building up a spiritually close relationship with the Creator. Islamic Sufism is all about following the example of the Prophet ﷺ in attaining the gnosis of Allah. Shāh-e-Hamadān advocates keeping Sufism within the code of conduct of the Shariyah. He is against the pseudo-Sufis who resort to Sufi practices for the attainment of worldly power, fame and wealth. These opportunists and ritualists have brought a bad name to Sufism and have polluted it with the activities not

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approved by the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. According to him, Sufism is not about taking seclusion in a cave but building social connections on the basis of empathy; this is the kind of philosophy that he puts forth in books like *Fatwatiya*. Prof. A.Q. Rafiqui in his book '*Sufism in Kashmir*' writes,

“Strict adherence to *shariya* and *sunna* as advocated by Ala-ud-Daula Simnani had greatly influenced Syed Ali's personality. He is reported to have said that had the *shariya* not prevented him, he would have preferred to live as an ascetic observing fasts throughout his life and never marry. He led a simple life, earning his livelihood by making caps. However, he did not disapprove of the possession of the wealth provided the rules of *shariya* such as paying the zakat were not ignored. Like many Sufis and scholars who were not satisfied with their contemporaries, Syed Ali also believed that people had not recognized his merits properly and did not know the value of his scholarship. However, he thought that generations coming a century after his death would be able to recognize his real worth.”

After the accomplishment of *tazkiya*, i.e., purification of self and realising social responsibilities, a Sufi has to work for the propagation of peace and prosperity in the society. There is no stagnation in his lifestyle, as Shāh-e-



Hamadān travelled the whole Muslim world thrice to gather a balanced worldview and to play his positive role in different parts of the world. Shāh-e-Hamadān would infuse spiritual dynamism and social activism in his disciples. In his travels, he would meet 'God's plenty' to learn about the problems of all the sections of the society. He met numerous saints and scholars on the way and attained their blessings. He endured trials and tribulations for the acquisition of knowledge and for the propagation of the Islamic teachings. Sometimes he got entangled in dangerous mountains, and many times he literally broke the ice to perform 'Wudhu' (ablution) and 'ghusl' (bath) for the spiritual purification. (6)

Shāh-e-Hamadān would maintain moderation in philosophical and practical Sufism. He was a great admirer of Ibn Arabi and was an ardent advocate of his "Wahdat-ul-Wujud". Although his teacher Alauddaula Simnani was fiercely opposed to the theory of wahdat ul wujood. He wrote a tract in defence of the wujudi doctrine, entitled "Risala Wujudiyya", and also wrote two commentaries on 'Fusus al-Hikam' of Ibn Arabi. According to Khaliq Ahmad Nizami and Faruq Bukhari, Sayyid Ali was the first to introduce Ibn Arabi's thought in South Asia. (7) However, at times, he critically analyses some of Ibn Arabi's views and offers explanations in many places.



Being a Sufi, the spiritual observations and epiphanies have a special place in his worldview. He continuously receives spiritual instructions regarding different issues that he faces. In fact, he was spiritually guided by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to carry out a mission to invite people to Islam in Kashmir, saying, "Son! Go to Kashmir, as the people there are away from the truth; invite them to Islam." In another spiritual experience, the Prophet ﷺ took out a booklet, and handing it to Shāh-e-Hamadān, said, "Take this 'Fathhiya' from me." Later, Shāh-e-Hamadān compiled the book, and on the basis of this instruction, named it 'Awrad Al Fathiya' (8).

4. Political Thought: Shāh-e-Hamadān, like all the Sufis, was least interested in politics. He had no interest in the corridors of power and always relied on his spiritual support. Despite being from a politically active family, he would never see his future in the political domain. His father was in a powerful post in the court of the ruler of Hamadān, but he also cared more for the spiritual wellbeing of his child by taking him to the leading spiritual masters of the time, like Syed Allauddin, Sheikh Ali Dosti and Sheikh Mahmud Mazdqani. Leaving the luxurious lifestyle, Shāh-e-Hamadān set out on the path of attaining the gnosis of God. When Shāh-e-Hamadān came to Kashmir, the ruler Sultan Qutb-ud-Din showed outstanding respect



and regard for him. He even offered him the luxuries of the royal court, but Shāh-e-Hamadān preferred to stay at an inn at Allauddinpora. Like Imam Ghazali, Shāh-e-Hamadān chose to be 'Nasih-ul-Muluk', i.e., the counsellor of the kings.

At that time, the Muslim rulers had become very weak and lazy; Shāh-e-Hamadān held many meetings with them and asked them to think and act. At the request of some rulers, he also wrote a book, 'Zakhirat-ul-Muluk', which consists of ten chapters. In the fifth chapter, Shāh-e-Hamadān expresses his thoughts on governance as per the guidelines of the Quran and the Sunnah. (6) It is quite obvious that Shāh-e-Hamadān wants to establish a just government based on Islamic principles and the model of the divinely guided caliphs of Islam. According to him, religious values have a special place in statecraft. From time to time, Shāh-e-Hamadān would guide the ruler of Kashmir to take appropriate steps to form a just government. It was the result of his reformatory work that the rulers were motivated to mend their ways and to renounce un-Islamic practices (such as keeping two sisters in a marital bond).

The political insight of Shāh-e-Hamadān can be gauged from the fact that there was a political rift



between the King of Kashmir, Qutbuddin, and Feroz Tughluq, which had a potential for war. Shāh-e-Hamadān made them reconcile and maintain peace and order in Muslim lands. One of the significant aspects of Shāh-e-Hamadān is that despite being a Sufi, he did not make any attempt to shun politics or the government from his concerns of reformation. Hamadani, on the contrary, apart from writing on the affairs of the state, made personal contacts with the rulers of Kashmir. He provided advice and guidelines derived from the Quran and Sunnah to the rulers for the smooth functioning of the state. According to him, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the father of international politics and a model of statesmanship for all mankind.

5. Religious tolerance: When Shāh-e-Hamadān entered Kashmir, he had no army or equipment with him; he was equipped with the spiritual equipment of truth and love. Millions of people were converted to Islam on account of his spiritual and magnetic personality.

People were released from the dungeons of poverty, slavery and the caste system and infused with a new dynamism to live a better life. By bringing with him skilful people as companions, he set a stage for an outstanding economic reformation. He, on the behest of



his skilful comrades, introduced an economic package to the masses and illuminated their lives forever. The people were so impressed that they decided to take refuge in Islam and took Shāh-e-Hamadān as their spiritual leader and mentor. This conversion was both progressive and peaceful, as not a single incident of coercion and violence is reported by the main historians. Since the people accepted the new faith by their own free will, there was no conflict in the society. The credit for it goes to the tolerant and benevolent personality of Shāh-e-Hamadān.

6. Harbinger of Islamic Revolution: Along with the preaching of Islam, Shāh-e-Hamadān also brought about a great socio-cultural and economic change in the Kashmiri society. With the help of his 700 skilful comrades, he changed the fate of Kashmir by introducing a new civilisation and brought about a complete transformation. He motivated scholars, artisans, artists, pharmacists, agriculturists, and tradesmen from Central Asia to stay permanently in Kashmir. In order to make his disciples self-reliant, he authored a book entitled 'Muash-ul-Salikeen, in which he advised his followers to earn their livelihood with their own hands so that they can earn a lawful sustenance.



According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, work is a kind of devotion; if it is lawful, it leads a Sufi towards a great spiritual upliftment. It was due to his efforts that the people of Kashmir were employed in different economic and artistic activities like shawl weaving, pashmina weaving, cotton and silk needlework, painting, calligraphy, woodwork, carpet making, cardboard making, tableware making, paper making, etc. He also established different institutions of learning like khanqahs, maktabas and mosques to promote knowledge and skill. Skill centres in remote and far-flung areas were also established by his companions, and it is because of these reformatory works that Kashmir was called 'Iran-i-Saghir', i.e., the Mini Iran. (10) He is also credited with establishing a library in the valley, which contained some valuable books on diverse subjects. Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes in *Islam in Kashmir*,

“Syed Ali Hamadani had brought with him a complete library wherein one could find even the rarest books. The library was under the charge of the kitabwar (librarian). It is also interesting to mention that the master masons who were the brains behind constructing the famous Jama Masjid at Srinagar were the followers of Mir Muhammad Hamadani, who, along with his other disciples, accompanied him to Kashmir.”

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7. Efforts for the Unity of Muslims: As far as Shāh-e-Hamadān 's religious creed is concerned, he was Sunni, Shafii in fiqh and Kubravi in 'Tasawwuf', but he respected all the well-known schools of thought of his time. He took the differences between different schools of thought in a positive way.

His personality was very much above the prevalent prejudices and sectarian tendencies. He took the Muslim Ummah as a single body; although some of its organs may be weak or diseased, efforts should always be made to treat them, but they should not be cut. On the one hand, he exhibits extraordinary love for Hazrat Ali (RA) and the Ahl-ul-Bayit, but on the other, he upholds the high status of the other three Caliphs of Islam, i.e., Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA), Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Uthman (RA), and envisages his followers to follow in their footsteps.

In Zakhirat al-Muluk, he draws the lessons of truth, honesty, trust, justice, mercy, open-heartedness and forgiveness from different stories based on their lives. He advises all Muslims to follow their example.

It is mentioned in some books that when he came to Kashmir, he observed that the Muslims offer prayers as per the Hanafi school of fiqh introduced by Sheikh Sharfuddin Bulbul. Shāh-e-Hamadān himself followed

the Shafii school of thought, but in order to save the people from confusion, he let them worship according to Hanafi fiqh and hence consolidated the foundation of Islam in Kashmir. (11)

“Syed Ali Hamadani, despite favouring both inward and outward dhikr, permitted the Kashmiri Muslims to recite group dhikr and even prescribed his own compiled awrad, '*Awradi Fathhiya*', for its loud recitation in chorus in mosques every morning. (Tarikh-i Kashmir: Syed Ali) The practice had proved so useful in the process of Islamisation that Syed Ahmad Kirmani, who entered Kashmir in the sixteenth century and forbade the people from reciting *Awradi Fathhiya* aloud in mosques, had to withdraw his fatwa after realising its baneful implications upon Islamic acculturation.” (*Islam in Kashmir*: M A Wani) In fact, it is reported by some historians that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself appeared in his dream, telling him not to stop people from reciting *Awradi Fathhiya* loudly.

For him, the centre of focus was Islam and not any particular school of thought. These identities need not be annihilated, as they all derive their existence from the same sources, i.e., the Quran and the Sunnah. They should not be taken as a barrier in the preaching of Islam.



8. Impact on the Local Rishi Movement: Before the arrival of Shāh-e-Hamadān, there was already a spiritual tradition prevalent in Kashmir known as the Reshi Movement. Reshism was a spiritual movement stressing the universal values of peace, harmony, and fraternity among all, irrespective of religion. The Reshi's used to take renunciation and would undergo rigorous spiritual training in order to obtain a state of perfect quietude, freedom, and highest happiness, as well as liberation from attachment and worldly suffering. The Rishis had tendencies towards monasticism. They used to renounce all the worldly pleasures in order to attain spiritual knowledge and wisdom. They took refuge in forests, mountains and caves and lived a life of austerity and contentment. When Shāh-e-Hamadān came to Kashmir, he tried to purify this movement from monastic tendencies and made them aware of the terms and depths of Islamic Sufism. These efforts later on culminated in the form of Sheikh Nuruddin Reshi (Nund Reshi), who can be called the reviver of the Reshi Movement. Sheikh Nuruddin Reshi was guided by Mir Muhammad Hamadāni, who was the son and spiritual heir of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Nund Reshi was inclined towards seclusion and renunciation, but Mir Muhammad Hamadāni motivated him to come out with a social commitment. He played the role of preaching



the basic tenets of Islam in the local vernacular. He used the Kashmiri language to reach ordinary people and played a pivotal role in introducing the teachings of Islam to the common man. In his poetry, he lays emphasis on showing compliance with the tenets of Islamic Shariyah in letter and spirit. (12)

After taking a deep study of the life and works of Shāh-e-Hamadān, we can say that “He was not of an age but for all time!” Though seven hundred years have passed, his teachings are as relevant as ever, and they can still guide us towards success in all the spheres of life.

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Mir Syed Ali Hamadani: The Harbinger of Islamic Revolution in Kashmir

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

A radical or pervasive change in society or in the socio-political structure is called a 'revolution'. In modern times, the human life is considered to be divided into two parts: the one that deals with individual life, which consists of religious beliefs and rituals, while the other part deals with the collective affairs of a society and encompasses socio-political and economic systems. This part of life on a major scale is an essential ingredient of a civilisation.

A judicious study of history reveals that the greatest and most comprehensive revolution on this earth was carried out by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings



of Allah be upon him) on the land of Arabia, and the whole of humanity benefitted from its blessings. After about 700 years, Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, following the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ), tried to replicate the same in Kashmir, the Northern Areas, Poonch, Rajouri, Mirpur, Gilgit, etc., and came up with astounding results. An outstanding social, cultural, political, economic and religious revolution was carried out, which showered its blessings upon the natives and is still benefiting the people of these areas. It is an indisputable fact that Shah-e-Hamadan emerged not merely as a religious preacher in Kashmir but also as a social, political, economic and cultural guide and brought about a comprehensive change in the lives and aspirations of the people. He introduced and ensured the implementation of universal values of human equality, fraternity and justice, which are an essential part of Islamic teachings. In the view of that system, the master and slave, ruler and subjects, rich and poor, and high and low-caste people were all equal. In a short span of time (about 3 years), he not only motivated a state to accept Islam but also succeeded in transforming the economic, social and political system through inclusive and peaceful means.

It should be borne in mind in particular that the fundamentals of the revolution in Kashmir were not



self-made by Shah-e-Hamadan, but he borrowed them from the example of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and did his best to promote and propagate it as best as he could. In his view, there is no need to devise any new method of revolution because the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) is suitable for every age. With his spiritual and intellectual capabilities, Shah-e-Hamadan made a tremendous impact on the minds of the people of Kashmir. He strengthened the foundations of Islam to such an extent that there is no evidence in history that people at any time thought of returning to their old beliefs after his departure from this land; rather, later on, some outstanding spiritual personalities like Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) and others emerged from the same nation and not even refrained from making sacrifices in the propagation of Islam. Shāh-e-Hamadān's revolution is diverse and comprehensive at the same time, and it is extremely difficult to access his spheres of influence. However, here we will try to focus on some important aspects that were covered by him:

1. Legal and Political Aspect:

A system of life based on truth and justice is essential for an ideal society. Islam is the religion that keeps in view the needs of human nature and guides its adherents to follow the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Shah-e-



Hamadan laid his foundation on the propagation and promotion of these teachings, and in order to popularise them, he established many educational and training centres at various places.

He built Khanqahs and mosques at various central places to familiarise people with Islamic teachings. He imported thousands of books from Central Asia so that the people would be acquainted with knowledge and wisdom. He made tireless efforts to transform Kashmiri society into a knowledge state. With the introduction of vibrant Islamic socio-cultural heritage, he made efforts for the perpetuation of Islamic values. The Islamic system of beliefs is based on the doctrine of Tawhid (monotheism). Shahi Hamadan introduced its spirit with all its requirements in the form of 'Awrad i Fathiyya', which became a rhythmic refrain for the people of Kashmir, who would recite it loudly in the mosques after the dawn prayers.

Since the Islamic system of governance ensures the protection of the life, property and honour of every individual, Shah-e-Hamadan maintained a good relation with the ruling class. He had no interest in engaging himself in the corridors of power, but he knew well that rulers have the key role in the enforcement of just laws. People usually follow their rulers without any



hesitation, so Shah i Hamadān took special attention in reforming the ruling class. Fortunately, most of the rulers held him in high esteem, and he decided to work as 'Nasih ul Mulook', i.e., the Counsellor of the Kings, and strived to entice them towards piety and justice. He wrote many reformative letters to the rulers of his time and dedicated his masterpiece “Zakhirat ul Malook” to them. He was highly successful, and there was a significant change in their behaviours.

He paid special attention towards the prevention of the practices that are not in harmony with the Qur'an and Sunnah. Although the ruler was a Muslim, the system of governance was completely un-Islamic. He motivated the ruling class to enforce the Islamic system of governance in letter and spirit. His wise disciples were appointed as judges in the courts so that the Islamic system of justice is followed and there is no oppression and exploitation.

2. Spiritual and Moral Aspect

Through the 'khanqahi' system of training, Shah-e-Hamadan adorned his disciples with the ornaments of piety and perseverance. He guided them not only to the deepest realms of spirituality but also motivated them to play an active part in social reform. He encouraged the existing Sufis of Kashmir to come out of self-imposed



seclusion and introduced them to a new mode of preaching. He made them realise their social responsibilities and motivated them to serve humanity in general. It is the result of these efforts that later on the great souls, like the Torchbearer of Kashmir Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) and Sultan-ul-Aarifeen Sheikh Hamzah Makhdoom (RA) were born in this part of the world and made immense contributions for the propagation of Islamic values. He took a keen interest in the construction of mosques and Khanqahs and appointed imams to provide Quranic education to the people. His comrades were blessed with diverse qualities; they were mystics, preachers, jurists, calligraphers, physicians, etc. He made the best use of their skills for the transformation of Kashmiri society. Through his efforts both religious and worldly education was provided in the seminaries. Before his arrival, the Kashmiri society had become a hotbed of evils. He played an important role in the eradication of adultery, gambling, alcoholism and other crimes through his da'wah activism. He not only urged the people to abstain from these crimes but also persuaded the ruling class to enact strict laws to curb them. Seeing this reformation, a large number of non-Muslims were so impressed that they showed their willingness to embrace Islam.



3. Economic and Cultural Aspect:

Under no circumstances can a person or society be oblivious of financial and economic concerns. In times of scarcity, hunger and poverty, the devotion to the religion also remains defective. Shah-e-Hamadan was well aware of this fact. He believed that Islam can make its roots strong only when the economic and financial problems of the people are fully addressed. He not only preached austerity but also showed ways to earn 'halal' (i.e., permissible) provisions. He paid special attention towards the development of industry and other handicrafts and offered a solution to unemployment and poverty. Despite his distinguished spiritual status, like a common man, he would earn his living by making caps with his own hands. He motivated his disciples to be self-sufficient by earning 'halal' provisions and wrote a treatise, "Muash-ul-Salikin", for this purpose. Shahi Hamadan emerged as 'the revivalist of the economy'. He motivated the rulers like Shahabuddin to facilitate trade and made efforts for economic stability. He advised the traders not to sell things at high prices. By conducting trade in accordance with Islamic principles, he created a new trend of selling and buying. The landlords were asked to distribute lands among the tenants so that there is no exploitation and economic inequality in the society. He introduced the Islamic system of charity in

the form of 'Futuwwah' so that the poor and the needy could be supported.

Describing the features of the economic revolution carried out by Shah i Hamadān, Dr Shamsuddin Ahmad writes:

"It was an intellectual training and a mental revolution that Shah i Hamadān brought to Kashmir. Since this task was accompanied with divine support, it remained safe from decline. Shah-e-Hamadan and his comrades were skilled in various arts related to the affairs of life. They were architects, physicians, traders, agriculturists, engineers, poets, writers, calligraphers and craftsmen. They were highly trained in worldly and spiritual affairs and were fully loaded with the capabilities to fix the gaps or shortcomings while calling people towards Islam. However, they were scholars first and then the professionals, and due to their abilities, the people of Kashmir were drawn towards them."

Shahi Hamadan made a great impact on the cultural level as well. Through his efforts, Persian language and literature gained a new impetus. People were familiarised with the rich heritage of Persian literature. High standards of Sufi poetry became accessible to the people, and it had a tremendous effect on the local languages. The Kashmiri language and diction got



enriched with Persian words (its deep influence can easily be seen even today), and it was released from the dominance of Sanskrit and became more inclusive. Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes,

“Syed Ali Hamadani's writings indicate that besides being a spiritual doctor, he was perfectly well up in the science of medicine. The knowledge of '*ilm-i-tibb*' helped the *pirs* to bring their personalities to bear upon the people.” (*Islam in Kashmir*, p. 169)

4. Da'wah Aspect:

In Islam, 'Da'wah' means to call people towards the way of Allah, and it is an obligation laid on every Muslim to do 'dawah' work. There can be different means and methods of da'wah; every verbal and practical effort to call people to the way of Allah is called "da'wah". From this point of view, the life of Shah-e-Hamadan seems to be a perfect example of sincere and peaceful Da'wah because for this cause he devoted his entire life. He carried out the work of da'wah according to the methodology taught by the Holy Qur'an. With his enlightened character and high morals, he guided all the sections of the society, especially the wandering ascetics, sorcerers and other transgressors, and turned their hearts towards Islam. There was no contradiction in his words and actions; he himself was the perfect example of



what he taught. Compassion was the basic element of his teachings, so he never resorted to any kind of coercion and compulsion. The people were so impressed by his way of preaching that they entered Islam in large groups. There was no place for extremism, terrorism and military confrontation in his Sufi doctrine, and history bears witness that Sufis have always been tolerant, apolitical and the most respectful to the other faiths. He presented Islam on aesthetical, spiritual and moral levels and abstained from teaching dry religiosity. He made good use of 'Hikmah', i.e., wisdom in preaching, which is an essential part of Quranic Da'wah. He resorted to a unique way of preaching called '*Tabligh bi Al Mithl*', which keeps in view the similarities found in various faiths and is mindful of the mental and psychological level of the people invited towards Islam. With his magnanimous and magnetic personality, Shah-e-Hamadan was able to attract all kinds of people, and their doubts were dispelled by his benevolent gaze.



Contemporary Relevance of Shāh-e-Hamadān

Prof. G. R. Malik*

There is a particular category of personages in human history who always remain relevant. They are the distinguished sons of mankind who establish contact with the Ultimate Reality, Allah (SWT), who is Timeless and Universal in the absolute sense. Those who are able to establish a spiritual contact with Allah acquire a relative type of timelessness and universality and never cease to become relevant. It is in this sense that we speak of them as men who never die but always remain alive.

Of course, ordinary men like us discover the relevance of these great souls in relation to our own time and space. Looking around us in the second decade of

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the twenty-first century and then looking back at Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān's revolutionary achievements, we find that he is immediately relevant to us in three main ways.

First, he was one of the distinguished heirs of what I call Islam's unifying and unified vision. What is this vision? Islam regards the whole of human life as an organic unity and considers it unrealistic and unscientific to divide it into different compartments and seek guidance from different heterogeneous and sometimes even opposing sources for these compartments. That spells anarchy in individual and collective life and deprives it of all peace and tranquillity. In Islam the same source of guidance regulates the private as well as the public life.

This unifying and organic vision of Islam was implemented in its most ideal form in the age of our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) and his rightly guided Caliphs. In that glorious period, the same person who led the prayers in the mosque also administered the societal affairs. During the Caliphate of the second Caliph of Islam, Umar bin Khattab, the Iranians suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of Muslims apparently far inferior to them in armaments and numerical strength. It was difficult for them to find a plausible

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explanation for this baffling phenomenon. To know the truth, the Iranian commander-in-chief deputed some spies to find out the real source of Muslim strength. After spending a few days with the Muslims in disguise, these spies came back to report:

رهبان في الليل وفرسان في النهار

They are hermits by night and horsemen by day.

In our age, Iqbal was the best exponent of this unified vision of Islam. His whole work is pivoted around this central preoccupation. For illustration we refer to two impressive examples from his poetry. In *Bal-i Jibril* there is a short but highly significant poem entitled *Deen-o-Siyasat*.

Which reads in translation:

The (Pauline) Church was essentially founded on renunciation,

How could renunciation reconcile with owning and mastering the world?

Power and escapism contradict each other:

Holding one's head high is not the same as bowing it low.

Politics then got rid of the control of religion;



The church father failed to stem the tide.

Once religion and statecraft were separated,

Positions of power were occupied by avarice and desire.

Duality is perdition alike to state and religion;

Duality denotes the sightlessness of civilization's eye.

It is a desert-dweller's living miracle.

That Basheeri reflects and is combined with the exercise of power.

Humanity's security and salvation lies in this

That the saintliness of Juniad and the stateliness of Ardsher are rolled into one.

My second illustration comes from '*Mathnavi Pes Chi Bayed Kard*' where Iqbal pays the most perceptive and most comprehensive tribute to the historic achievement of the Prophet (ﷺ). Here are the relevant lines of this tribute in translation:

“With the vital and rejuvenating breath of the Prophet al-Ummi

Tulips sprang forth from the desert sands of Arabia.



The movement of the freedom of thought and action
was nursed in his lap;

Thus, the today of modern nations is there because
of his yesterday.

He planted a heart in the body of man

And lifted the veil from his resplendent face.

Each god of yore he overthrew and broke;

Each dry old branch got a fresh sap and bud through
him.

All these –:

The heat of the turbulent battle-fields of Badr and
Hunain,

Haider, Umar al-Farooq, Siddique and Husain

The grandeur of the call of adhan in the battle-
ground,

The recitation of al-Safat in the thick of fighting,

The sword of (Salah-ud-Din) Ayyubi and the mystic
sight of Bayazid (Bistami),

Key to open the treasures of both the worlds;

Both reason and heart inebriated by the self-same
goblet –



The combination of the dhikr of Rumi and fikr of Razi,

Knowledge and wisdom, law and religion and administering the affairs

Even as hearts in the breasts would beat restless (for God),

The world-ravishing beauty of Alhambra and the Taj

Which elicits homage even from heaven's angels –

All these are an instant in his endless times,

Just one illumination in his endless illuminations.

His outer dimension (zahir) these heart-illuminating sights;

His inward dimension (batin) hid even from men of gnosis.”

This unified vision of Islam suffered a fatal split when the Caliphate was converted into hereditary monarchy after the first years of early Islam. It is a pity that during the last 1400 years Islam has never been able to recover fully from this split although not a single period has passed when pious individuals and groups did not try to restore the vision. Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān belongs to this category of dedicated souls.



An heir to the unified vision of Islam, he reflects in his person and achievement the unity of this vision. Symbolic of this great achievement is his book *Minhaj al-'Aarfeen* (the Pathway of the Gnostics) on one end and *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk* (Treasure-house of Guidance for the Kings) on the other. Once again it is Iqbal who has summed up his achievement most perceptively. In his tribute to Shāh-e-Hamadān, Iqbal wrote:

“That lord of the Paradise-like land,
Advisor alike to the chief, the saint and the Kings.
To the region that liberal handed master
Gave knowledge, craft, culture and religion.”

Knowledge, craft, culture and religion covers the whole gamut of life and leaves nothing out.

The second way in which Shāh-e-Hamadān is immediately relevant to us is the pattern he has set for us of how to avoid the pitfalls of temptation to political power. In the century that has gone by, we have been sad witnesses to some tragic failures of attempts to revive Islam. Although failure and success from the Islamic point of view is not counted in this-worldly terms, yet the fact remains that these failures – both in the Middle East and the Subcontinent – were due to a serious



misconstruction and fallacy. Reformers at the head of these movements saw that the modern state had become monolithic and controlled everything including means of communication and education. It was felt that without controlling the state machinery no reform would be possible. It was fallacious firstly because all desire for power is inherently so corrupting that it unconsciously distorts the thinking and behaviour of the power-seekers. Secondly to think that any spiritually-oriented system can be put in place through Western democratic system is not merely fallacious but utterly self-defeating. Western democracy with the electoral system associated with it, is the political garb that Materialism has devised to fulfil its ends. Materialism is therefore ingrained in every nerve and pore of it. The first step on this path is the first step away from Islam. Islam, for instance, says that positions of power should not be given to those who seek after them whereas democratic process begins with seeking power by filling up of nomination papers. Unfortunately, our thinkers were led to believe that they could revive Islam through this process. Such efforts failed because they were bound to fail; you cannot extinguish fire with fire. No doubt Allah (SWT) will reward those who made these efforts because their intentions were pious and noble. Facts, however, are and would remain facts.



Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān's example teaches us that like him we should concentrate on inner purification and character building of men including those in positions of power. Everything else will follow under Allah's permission and in accord with His wisdom. What is required is sincere faith, selflessness and dedication.

The third ground of Harzrat Shāh-e-Hamadān's relevance to us is his total disregard of the maslaki differences. Like a genuine reformer and dedicated servant of Islam he knew that people owing allegiance to different schools of fiqh had no difference of opinion as far as the fundamentals of Islam are concerned. On peripheral issues of detail there are minor differences which have no bearing on Islam as a system of belief and action. It was therefore sheer stupidity to attach any importance to these differences. As long as salat is performed in the spirit of the Quranic injunction *aqim as-salata li dhikri* (establish salat to remember Me), it is of no consequence whether a person places his hands on his breast while praying or keeps them hanging down. Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān himself followed the Shafie maslak but in Kashmir, where converts generally followed the Hanafi fiqh, he did not interfere in the least, as he carried forward the mission of Islam. Indeed, he does not even care to refer to the maslaki differences. Fortunately, until Shāh-e-Hamadān's day the



commonwealth of Islam had not been so sharply torn by sectarian dissensions. Even the Shia-Sunni divide was not so acute as it became later mainly for political reasons. Today when conspiracies are being hatched to divide us on sectarian lines, Shāh-e-Hamadān's example seems to cry out to us:

Hold fast, all of you together, by the rope of Allah and be not divided. (Quran 3:103)



Mir Syed Ali Hamadani and His Contribution to Islam in Kashmir

Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi*

Syed Ali Hamadani (1) was a great reformer and a visionary who has impacted almost all the aspects of the lives of Kashmiris . Be it a religious or spiritual dimension or a social and political one, be it the economic activity by introducing the arts and crafts of Iran and Central Asia in Kashmir or the instructions to the kings and rulers, in all these matters the influence and impact of Syed Ali Hamadani cannot be undermined . He has influenced the Muslim Rishis and Hindu ascetics equally by his deep spiritual indoctrination. His son Mir Mohammad Hamadani

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continued his mission in Kashmir and was instrumental in initiating the local Rishi Saint Sheikh Nooruddin Wali into his Sufi discipleship, thus paving the way for a long and enduring process of Islamisation of not only Kashmir but even the localised mystic orders of Kashmir like Rishism. He was the only preacher of Islam in Kashmir and Baltistan (Northern Areas, Pakistan) who brought a clandestine change in the lifestyles of Kashmiri masses and provided them with Islamic values and established the Persian culture in the soil of Kashmir. In this way Kashmir was transformed into a new phase of its civilisational march from Buddhist and Hinduised moorings to an Islamic and Iranian one. It was due to these Persian influences on the socio-cultural life of the people in Kashmir that Sir Mohammad Iqbal has given reference to Kashmir in his poetry as *Iran-i-Sagheer*, meaning little Iran.

Apart from the culture and mannerism, the cultural traits of Kashmiri literary life were also influenced greatly by his arrival to Kashmir. From Persia were received these genres: *ghazl*, *qasidah*, *marsiya*, *rubai*, *mathanavi*, *naat* and *Manqabat*, as there were very few genres like *vaakh*, *wattsun* and *shrukh* known to the Kashmiris.



He preached Islam and affected the conversion of thousands of people from Buddhism to Islam by his great efforts. He constructed many *Khânqâhs*, mosques and memorial places in these areas; some places are very popular in Asia, particularly the "Chaqchan Mosque". Noorbakhshis of Northern Areas have great belief and reverence for him, and they follow him through Syed Muhammad Noorbaksh.

To start with, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, the apostle of Kashmir, better known as the "Shah of Hamadan" and 'Ameer e Kabeer' (1314-1384) is arguably the most celebrated of these Syeds, coming from Iran and Central Asia in the mediaeval period and who have blessed Kashmir and have accelerated the process of Islamisation of Kashmir, which has continued after them and is still continuing unabated. In the state there are four major hospices dedicated to the Shah: the *Khânqâh e Mu'alla* (Srinagar), Trâl, Doru and Shey (Ladakh). There also are several lesser-known hospices of the Shah, which are situated at Sopore and Paampore, etc. The Shah died either at Hazara (Pakistan) or in Kafiristan. However, he was buried in Khatlan (Tajikistan).

His room, where he stayed for the first time, is a part of a great building, named *Khanqah-e-Mualla* (the



hospice). The building is a beautiful model of wooden architecture of Kashmir, with engravings on walls. Friday prayers are said here, where hundreds gather to pray. The sacred relics include the Prophet's flag, the pillar of the Prophet's tent, and Shāh-e-Hamadān's walking stick, which is also housed in this hospice. During his life the place acquired the distinction of being the centre of religious learning and spiritual enlightenment. People throng to the place and pray there to Allah even today.

The Shah was born in Hamadan, Iran. He travelled across the continents for twenty-one years in the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual enlightenment. He met 1400 saints in the process before he returned to Hamadan. The Shah of Hamadan reached Kashmir in 1372. He went to Ladakh around 1381 and was the first to establish a mosque there.

Hamadani entered the valley in the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-Din in 774/1372. After staying for a short time, he left for Mecca. He visited Kashmir a second time in 781/1379 in the reign of Sultan Qutbu'd-Din. This time he stayed in there for two and a half years and then left for Turkistan via Ladakh in 783 A.H. He paid the third visit in 785/1383, stayed in Kashmir for a short period, and then left "Kashmir on account of ill-health



and stayed at Pakhli for ten days at the request of the ruler of that place whose name was Sultan Muhammad.” However, *Baharistan-i-Shahi* does not mention Hamadan's third visit to Kashmir. Hamadani died in 786 A.H., at the age of 73, in Kanar, a place in the vicinity of Pakhli. His body was carried to Khattalan, now in Tajikistan, and was buried there on 25 Jamadul Awwal, 787,130 (14 July 1385). (2)

It is said that Saiyid Ali Hamadani travelled through the then-inhabited world thrice in his life. The purpose of his visit was to know the etiquettes, customs and manners of the people living in these places. He says, for example:

“I travelled thrice from the West to the East and observed many wonderful events and things in the sea and land. Whenever I reached a city or an inhabitant, I observed that the customs and habits of that place are altogether different from those of the other places.” (3)

Abu Muhammad Hajji Muhiuddin has indicated that this travelling has taken place in this manner. In the first instance, he visited from one city to another, the second time from one village to another and the third time from one household to another. He met the ascetics, Qutbs, and others during this travelling.



Nooruddin Badakhshi writes: "That during his travels, he went to Muzdaq and Khatlan, Baulk, Badakhshan, Syria, Baghdad, Hijaz, Rome, Mawaraul-al-Nahar and Sarandeeep (Lanka)." (4)

Thus, the travels of Syed 'Ali Hamadani were quite extensive. (Though Prof. Rafiqui, Prof. Khan, Ghulam Rasool Bhat and other scholars hold that the early sources are unanimous "in saying that Sayyid 'Ali came to Kashmir only once." While Hasan and Miskin maintain that 'Sayyid 'Ali visited Kashmir three times, in 774/1372-73, 781/1379-80, and 785/1383-84. Rafiqui, for example, says that according to a legend, Sayyid Ali is said to have travelled three times all over the world, and Hasan and Miskin seem to have based their account on this story. Such modern scholars as Muhi'ud-Din Sufi and Muhibbul Hasan agree with them, both relying on Miskin." (5).

According to Hikmat, Sayyid 'Ali visited Kashmir twice (6). In the same way, an Iranian journal, Darya, Shiraz, indicates that Saiyid Ali came to Kashmir in A.H. 785 for the third time and stayed there up to Dhil-q'adah of 786 before intending to leave Kashmir (Prof. Shamsu'd-Din Ahmad) (7).

He belonged to a branch of the Suhrawardi order of Sufis, known as *Kubrawis*. It was the Shâh who brought



this sect to Kashmir. The Kubrawis dominate the religious establishment of Srinagar, indeed Kashmir, to this day. The Shâh is said to have induced thirty-seven thousand Kashmiris to convert to Islam.

Some important colleagues of Shah-i-Hamadan and the places where they are buried are as follows:

Mir Syed Samani or Syed Samnani-Kulgam.

Mir Syed Haidar-Kulgam

Syed Jalaluddin 'Attayee-Kejhamah, Baramullah.

Syed Kamal Thani-Naid Khai, Anantnag.

Syed Jalaluddin Muhaddith, --Fatha Kadal Srinagar.

Syed Feeroze-Sampur (Pampur)

Syed Muhammad Kazim-Lattapora (Pampur)

Syed Rukunu'd-Din -Awanpora, Baramullah.

Syed Fakhru'd-Din. -Awanpora, Baramullah.

Syed Muhammad----Qureshi----Bijbihara Islamabad.

Syed Muhammad Qureshi, pargana Shada, Mujah Latar.

Pir Muhammad Qari--Qutbuddinpora. Langrata.

Syed Muhammad Baihaqi, --Sikandra. (8)



The Shâh's son, Mîr Muhammad Hamadâni (1372-1450), returned to Kashmîr in 1393, accompanied by three hundred more Syeds. At the time, Sinhabhatt/Suhabhatt was the commander in chief of King Sikander's army and later the prime minister. And he was a devoted follower of Mir Mohammad Hamadani. Mir Mohammed, the illustrious son of Syed Ali Hamadani, also continued the mission of his father and established some of his companions at the following places:

Syed Muhammad Madani - Nowshara Srinagar.

Syed Mohammed Hisari - Skindarpora.

Syed Ali Akbar - Tashwan Qalandar pora Srinagar.

Syed Mohd. Kirmani -- Tashwan Qalandar pora, Srinagar.

Syed Muhammad. Zandaposh - Mazar-i-Salatin.

Syed Haji Muhammad - Ranawari.

Syed Nooruddin - Rainawari.

Syed Muhammad - Rainawari.

Syed Muhammad Isfahani - Baramullah.

Syed Muhammad Afzal - Nawshahra.



Syed Khalil Azizi -Sadrabal.

Syed Kamal -Naid Khai.

Syed Muhammad Qureshi -Bijbhara.

Syed Abdullah -Bijbhara.

Syed Murad -Bijbhara.

Syed Kamal -Sadra Maji.

Syed Mohammed 'Aanposh -KanaKadal.

Syed Habibullah Azizi-Nawshahra

Syed 'Allau'd-Din -Skandrapora. (Son of Syed Jalalu'd-Din Bukhari Jahaniyan Jahan gasht).

Syed Zeerak (Syed Ziyau'd-Din) Kandah-Hamah.

Syed Nooruddin -Zania Kadal.

Syed Fakhruddin -Neewah.

Syed Abdullah -Andarwari, Srinagar.

Syed Mohammed Nooristani, Hawal.

Syed Mohammed Khwari -Fath Kadal.

Syed Ali Akbar -Maisma

Syed Qutbu'd-Din -Qutbu'd-Din pora. (9)



It is pertinent to mention here that apart from Syed Ali Hamadani, Sufis like Mir Muhammad, Saiyid Jamaluddin Bukhâri and Saiyid Ismail Shami began to enter Kashmir in quick succession. One important ideological framework, which can be discerned running through all the activities of foreign and local Sufis and mystics in Kashmir, was based mainly on the works of Ibn 'Arabi, and the Kashmiri Sufis seem to have taken little notice of Shaykh Alaud-Din Simani's criticism of *Wahdat-al-Wajud* of Ibn Arabi. A different trend, which emerged after the coming of the Sufis from Persia and Central Asia, was the crude, synchronised form of it, which came to force with the development of an indigenous Sufi order known as the Rishism (10)".

To start with, let us take a close view of some Sufi stalwarts. The *Wahdat-al-Wajud* (Unity of Being) philosophy was advocated by almost all Sufis, which has several resemblances with Hindu Vedanta, darshan. It is important to note that Syed Ali Hamadani, the famous 'Kubarawi' Sufi Saiyid Ali Hamadani (1314-1384), was an ardent advocate of the same philosophy. Although Sayyid Ali's teacher Allaudin Simnani was fiercely opposed to the theory of *Wahdat-al-Wajud*... He wrote a tract in defence of the Wujudi doctrine, entitled "*Risala-I-Wujudiyya*". He wrote two commentaries on Ibn Arabi's acclaimed *Fusus-al-Hikam*". According to

Farooq Bukhari, Sayyid Ali was the first to introduce Ibn Arabi's thoughts in South Asia.

Impact on Non-Muslim Saints: Apart from influencing Muslim Sufis and masses, Syed Ali Hamadani and his Sufi colleagues have influenced the non-Muslim ascetics substantially. It is pertinent here to say that dissatisfied with the religion of the Brahmans, Lal had therefore no other alternative but to seek the company of the Kabrawi Sufi, Sayyid Husain Simnani, who had settled in the village of Kulgam during the reign of Sultan Shihabuddin. While Lal Ded was a wandering mystic, Simnani was engaged in a philanthropic mission in Kulgam. Lal Ded did not give a systematic exposé of Saivism on the lines laid down by the theologians who preceded her; on the other hand, her “songs illustrate a picture of the actual hopes and fears of the common folk that nominally followed the teachings of those men whom they had accepted as their guides”.

There was great impact that was received by this wandering mystic like Lala from her surrounding Islamic personages like Sayyid Husain Simnani, Sayyid Tajuddin and Sayyid Ali Hamadani. She imbibed a critical attitude towards the manifold abuses of the caste-ridden social order. Her verses against the Brahmanical supremacy show that she, as well as other

sensitive elements of the mediaeval non-Muslims, were receiving subtle impacts of Islamic acculturation, as this fact is also attested by strong documentary evidence.

Muhibbul Hassan, while explaining the same phenomenon, has said that the Unitarian or Vedantist influence of Kashmir owes its origins to external factors and not to the local mystical ethos of Kashmir. He writes:

“So far as Sufism in Kashmir, as introduced by the followers of the great orders, is concerned, it did not come under the influence of Advaita Saivism in its doctrinal aspect. The evolution of Islamic mysticism into a well-developed system of thought and way of life had been achieved by the middle of the thirteenth century, and the ideas, if any, which it borrowed from Buddhist and Vedantic philosophy, it did so in countries outside Kashmir. Moreover, the founders and chief exponents of the Qadiri, Kubarawi, Suhrawardi, and Naqasahbandi Orders in the Valley were in general orthodox in outlook, adhering to Islamic laws and practices and denouncing antinomianism and incarnationist tendencies. They also frowned upon the extreme asceticism which sanctioned celibacy, the annihilation of all desires, self-torture, and an ivory-tower existence. But in spite of their attempts to

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maintain high Islamic ideals, Sufism in Kashmir, as elsewhere, did in the end compromise with many of the traditional practices which were openly polytheistic. Popular Islam in Kashmir thus became diluted with foreign elements, and this character has been retained until today. (11)

Economic Reforms and Political Role: *Saadah*

Syed Ali Hamadani holds man as a microcosm in whom are reflected all the attributes of the macrocosm. God has deposited in his heart the secrets or elements which are neither in *Arsh* (Throne), *Farsh* (Earth) nor *Aasman* (sky). Syed says that man is a small universe in his appearance, but in actuality, he is the macrocosm (*Jahan-i-Kabir*) (12).

Here his philosophy of *Wahdat al Wajud* has played a very important role also. Since Syed Ali Hamadani was greatly influenced by Ibn Arabi's *Wahdat-al-Wajud*, the universe according to him is a “Big Man” created by God in order to realise Himself, while man is a small universe, reflecting like a well-polished mirror the objects of nature or cosmos as they really are. The perfect man is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is endowed with the ability to cognise or understand the whole universe. All the elements of the universe receive the munificence of God through him, and through him,

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God beholds His creatures and has mercy upon them.
(13)

To Syed Ali Hamadani, *S'aadah* is the end of man's life and the objects. But no end is an end in itself; it becomes a means for another end. For everything, there is some special purpose or end for which it is created, it is achieved, and it renders happiness possible. Hamadani calls this end as *Sa'adat*, or *Saadat-i-Ukhrawia*, or *Saadah-al-'Abdi*, or *Saadat-i-Haqiqi*.

One can attain *Sa'adah* by following the people who are on the right path. Moreover, one should spend his possessions in the way of God. Though it is very difficult to stand in the rank of Sufis, still one should make his efforts to be in the rank of *Ahl-i-Futuwwat* (people of magnanimity). If one does not do so, he will be amongst the people in loss. (14)

Men are created dependent. They need each other's help for the fulfilment of their works and their success. Thus, the people should help each other according to their capacity. (15)

Hamadani substantiates his views by a prophetic saying, i.e., “The Prophet said that Muslims are like a building in which every brick supports the building for its erection and strength. In the same way, the individual

Muslims are like the bricks giving essential support to the edifice of Muslim society. Externally strong people possessing the gifts of God must spend them in His way. But on the contrary, they forget their duty and the rights of others.” (16)

Hamadani exhorted people to spend in the way of God and admonished the people for their miserliness. For example, he quotes the Quranic verses in which it is revealed that the possession of a miser will be of no use in the life hereafter. It will become the cause of the miser's destruction, rather. (17)

Miserliness causes destruction and bloodshed and is an open revolt against Allah. Sayed Ali quotes a tradition, which runs as: “Save yourself from miserliness. It caused the destruction of the people before you. Due to it, they did bloodshed and made forbidden things lawful (halal). They are condemned to Hell.” (18)

The malady of miserliness should be overcome by spending the wealth in the way of Allah. One should sit in the gathering of good ones to reach the goal or to attain the *Saadah*. (19)

Hamadani exhorts the Muslim ruler to satisfy the needs of the Muslims, as it constitutes the highest form

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of worship. He should always seek to satisfy the needs of his subjects. (20)

Thus, Syed Ali Hamadani has presented a comprehensive code of conduct for an individual and a ruler to lead a virtuous life, which could finally lead him to eternal salvation (*Sa'adah*). In this scheme, he has not lost sight of earning by lawful means and spending one's possessions in the way of God. He has laid emphasis on earning from *Halal* (lawful) sources, which is a hallmark of his Sufi thought.

Therefore, he did not just preach religion but attempted to provide people with such beneficial arts and crafts which could benefit them immensely. The *Sadat* (descendants of the prophet SAW) and the people who accompanied Syed Ali Hamadani to Kashmir came from Iran, Iraq, Kabul, Kandahar, Bukhara and other areas. They brought along with them different arts and crafts, thus paving the way for the development of handicrafts.” (21)

Thus, the economy of Kashmir and the social conditions of the valley became better. It is said that Saiyid Ali Hamadani brought a large group of 700 people with him to Kashmir. However, they did not become a burden on Kashmir. Because they brought with them Iranian arts and crafts and made them well



established in Kashmir. Several industries of Hamadan and Iran became well introduced in Kashmir. The shawl industry was in its moribund condition when Syed Ali came to Kashmir. It was due to the fervent support of this industry and the patronage of the Sultan Qutbu'd-Din that this industry received a new lease of life.

Shah-i-Hamadan adopted cap-making as the source of his earnings. This profession remained intact even after the Shah came to Kashmir. Thus, Shah-i-Hamadan made Kashmir a minor Persia (Iran-i-Sagheer) with these fine and captivating industries and crafts.” (22)

Shawl-Baffi (shawl weaving) is known as “Kar-i-Ameeri” in Kashmir, perhaps for the same reason that the Sultan under the guidance of Shah-i-Hamadan gave it very much importance in order to make it a living industry once again.

It is not only the Shawl industry, which was revived by Syed Ali by his clandestine efforts. But the Amir gave even the other local and Iranian crafts prevalence in Kashmir. Most of the scholars, like Shamsu'd-Din, Nishat Ansari, Dr Iqbal, Farooq Bukhari, Mustaq Hamadani, and others, attribute the emergence of these industries to Syed Ali Hamadani. Thus, apart from bringing new sciences, culture and values from Iran to Kashmir, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani created a different

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environment in Kashmir by promoting various arts and crafts of Iran there.

However, though history bears testimony to the fact that Zainul-'Abidin and Mirza Haidar were two important rulers of Kashmir who promoted various arts and crafts in the valley, in a different context the introduction of arts and crafts can easily be attributed to Sayyid Ali, as he opened the gates of interaction between Iran and Kashmir in a manner which has no precedent. As said earlier, more than 700 people arrived in Kashmir with Sayyid Ali, and all of them were not religious scholars or Islamic preachers. All of them were not even Sayyids. But there is no doubt that they were representatives of Iranian culture and Islamic legacy. Thus, apart from bringing new sciences, culture and values from Iran to Kashmir, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani created a congenial atmosphere for the promotion of various arts and crafts of Iran in the Valley.

The arts and crafts of Kashmir have been justly renowned for centuries all over the world. They consist mainly of handicrafts like woollen textiles of fleecy soft texture and infinite fineness in wearing, delicate embroidery work in silk and wool, hand woven carpets of finest warp and woof, lovely painting in wonderful designs on papier machie goods or on wood, fine



traceries in wood-carving, deft weaving in willow-wicker, and superb metal work, of the cottage industries the most flourishing is that of wood-carving-which is not only beautiful but also of great utility, and which finds a ready and expanding market throughout the world, especially for work suited to modern requirements, (such as screens, drawing and dining room sets, smoking cabinets, and other articles of personal use) which are exquisitely manufactured in well-seasoned walnut-wood. An entirely indigenous form of woodwork (known as *Khatam bundi*) is used for the decoration of ceilings, fitted together in grooves. Another important cottage industry is the making of numerous useful and pretty articles of wickerwork. (23)

These are the arts and crafts of Kashmir, which have developed over a long period of time. But when we see these in their real context, the interaction, it seems that between Iran and Kashmir facilitated the emergence of these and new crafts and arts like *Najari*, *Hamam dari*, *Naqashi*, *Kafashdoozi*, *Kala pachapazi*, *Dozandagi*, *Kabab Pazi*, *Hareesa pazi*, *Halwapazi*, *Shirini pazi*, *Gilkari*, *Zargari*, *Sahafi*, *'Qaligari*, *Khimahdoozi*, *Lihaffdoozi*, *Kakazsazi*, *Qalamdan sazi*, *Hakaki*, *Zardadoozi*, *Misgari*, *Maharkuni*, *Kharati*, *Zahgiri*, *Kamangari*, *Kulah doozi*, *Roghan Kashi*, *Namdasazi*, or *Namda gari*, *Sozan kari*, *Checken Dozi*, *Pasham sazi*,



Kundan gari, Nadafi, Cheet sazi, Koza gari, jild sazi, or Jild--gari, etc. However, some of these professions were basically indigenous in the valley, but most of these professions and arts came to Kashmir from Iran and Central Asia. The Kings of Kashmir made them prominent in Kashmir by assigning them a prevalent place. Zainul-'Abidin invited, for example, artisans from Samarqand like *Sahaf, Kakaz saz, Qaleen bauf, Jild-saz, Qalamdan saz, Hakak, Muharkun* and other experts of arts and crafts. Moreover, he sent some Kashmiris to Iran and Central Asia for learning these different arts and professions. (24)

Thus, the Kashmir shawl industry, for example, *Pashmina, Tafla, Shah Tus* and other varieties, became famous world over. In the same way, Kashmiri woollen and *Rufal shawls* (embroidered or simple), carpets, bookbinding, *Qalamdan sazi*, and *Sozan-Kari* are still existing in Kashmir. Moreover, the woodcarving, Roshan Gari and handicrafts are such important Iranian arts, which have continued to flourish in the Valley. The shoulder mantle or shawl had been in existence, in a variety of forms, from the most ancient times, serving as a staple and protective garment not only for the rich and noble but also and above all for the common people. In ancient Buddhist literature the shawl can be found among recorded inventories of woollen textiles, and its

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manufacture appears to have been in existence at least as early as the late sixteenth century. (25)

For example, several Hindu scriptures suggest that the fabric of the shawl was produced in the valley during the epic age. The Mahabharata holds the tradition that when Lord Krishna went to the Kauras (the sons of Dhritrashtra, King of Hastinapur) as a representative of the Pandavas (the sons of King Pandav, who on his death was succeeded by his brother Dhritrashtra), he presented them with 10,000 Kashmiri shawls. (26)

However, as said earlier, it was during the period of the 14th century when Shah-i-Hamadan came along with his companions that the shawl industry was revived in Kashmir. He has been credited with introducing this industry once again in the valley after its decline. Later on, Zainul-'Abidin and the Mughals contributed clandestinely to its progress in the Valley.

J.M.D. Sufi says, It was, however, through the efforts of the great saint, Shāh-e-Hamadān, that the shawl, as we know it, was reborn in Kashmir in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and the shawl industry took a new lease of life. Sultan Qutbu'd-Din, who was then the ruler of Kashmir, “patronised, nourished and stimulated it.” (27)

Another scholar writes: -

“Sayyed 'Ali travelled widely throughout Kashmir preaching Islam, establishing the Kubrawi Sufi order wherever he went. Along with him from West and Central Asia had come some 700 of his disciples, whom he dispatched to various places in Kashmir to spread the faith and set up Sufi hospices and mosques. Besides preaching Islam, these disciples play a key role in promoting various arts and crafts, for which Kashmir is famous and unrivalled today. Many of these disciples were skilled artisans and craftsmen, and they introduced into Kashmir such arts as had earlier been developed in Iran, such as shawl weaving, carpet-making, papier-mâché, calligraphy, silver and brass smithy and book-binding.” (28)

Mohibbul Hassan holds: -

“It is also stated that the Shawl industry was founded by Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 1378.”

N. Saraf says:

“It is said that Mir Sayyid Ali of Hamadan, known as Shāh-e-Hamadān, who visited Kashmir for the second time in 1398 and stayed for over two years, encouraged some Shawl weavers to produce fine textures, implying thereby that Shawl fabric was already being woven in Kashmir.” (29)



Moreover, Mohammed Yousuf Teng, Prof. Muhibul-Hasan, Hakim Ghulam Hussein Makhmoor and other important researchers unanimously regard Shah-i-Hamadan and his mission as the great advent of the emergence of arts and crafts in Kashmir, as in its wake about 713 people belonging to various professions entered Kashmir Valley. This fact becomes more significant in the background that at that time there were about twelve thousand idol-makers present in the Valley. Since Islam does not approve of idol-carving, these idol-makers would have been rendered jobless if the Shah had not provided them with alternative professions. Syed Ali Hamadani facilitated their earning by encouraging them to take the profession of stone-carving and handicrafts by the agency of the numerous artisans who had accompanied him on his expedition to Kashmir, apart from the preachers who came with him. As a result, these Kashmiri idol-makers were provided training in stone and slab carvings, which were meant for placing on the tombs with the fine calligraphic inscriptions on them.”

In due course of time, these local artisans were able to absorb the niceties and subtleties of this new art. Now these stones and slabs were decorated with fine calligraphic inscriptions. Thus, these people were provided a better alternative to their traditional professions.

Moti Lal Saqi says: -

“About the shawl industry, there is a famous view (of historians) that this fine and beneficial art was made prevalent in Kashmir by Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, who is regarded as the founder of Islam in Kashmir. He came to Kashmir three times and was accompanied by religious scholars and expert craftsmen and artists of Central Asia, who settled down in Kashmir and made it their permanent abode. It is due to these craftsmen and artists that the shawl industry was firmly established in Kashmir and made great progress, which has rendered the world wonder-struck.”

Nishat Ansari says: -

“If it is said that apart from being a spiritual guide (Murshid-i-Ma'anawi) and holder of royal (spiritual) secrets, Shah-i-Hamadan was the first architect who introduced industry, arts and crafts and hand-crafts in the Valley, it will not be an exaggeration.” (30)

The art of calligraphy was introduced in the Valley by Mir Syed Ali Hamadani and got its stronghold at various places in Kashmir. It was up to the period of Zainu'l-'Abidin that *Khat-i-Diwani*, *Khat-i-Ru'gh*, *Khat-i-Reehan*, *Khat-i-Saroo*, *Khat-i-Shafeeah*, *Khat-i-Shakastah*, *Khat-i-Tugra*, *Khat-Ghubar*, *Khat-i-Kufi*,



Khat-i-Gulzar, Khat-i-Magrabhi, Khat-i-Muhaqiq, Khat-i-Makki, Khat-i-Madani, Khat-i-Mahi, Khat-i-Munhani, Khat-i-Nakhun, Khat-i-Naskh and Khat-i-Nastaleeqh, about two dozen beautiful and captivating calligraphic designs were developed. Though later on, from all these calligraphic forms, only three forms of calligraphy remained in vogue, i.e., *Khat-i-Shikasta, Khat-i-Naskh*, and *Khat-i-Nastaliqh*, and these forms are still in use. Because in these calligraphic forms important and rare manuscripts, royal commands, classical poetical compositions, Reshinamahs, epic literature, important documents, and religious and historical writings are preserved in various academic and literary centres, research libraries, etc. Though it can't be claimed that in making all these art forms prevalent in the Valley, only Syed Ali was responsible single-handedly, this art form owes its origin to him to a great extent, as he initiated the process of assimilation of Persian culture and its various manifestations, calligraphy included, in the Valley. (31)

Thus, Syed Ali Hamadani placed great emphasis upon earning one's own livelihood (*akl-I-Halal*). He rejected the entire idea of charity for religious men or Sufi orders because he feared that this would make them parasitical on society. He himself made his living by cap making and encouraged his murids to do some work to



earn their livelihood. Hamadan's commitment to crafts is linked with the establishment of handicraft industries in Kashmir. His role in this respect was both motivational and exemplary. It is quite true also that the art of papier-mâché was introduced in Kashmir by the companions of Shah-i-Hamadan.

This research leads one to conclude that Mir Syed Ali Hamadani was not only a religious preacher and missionary but also a craftsman and artist at one and the same time. His efforts to make the shawl industry well established in Kashmir have earned him the epithet of “Kar-i-Amir” (the work introduced by Amir Syed Ali Hamadani). Therefore, he is regarded as the founder of this industry in Kashmir.

Apart from the economic and social revolution brought to Kashmir by Syed Ali Hamadani, he wrote a book for the guidance of the rulers, named *Zakhiratul-Muluk*; thus, he provided to the rulers of his time a code of conduct to present a system of good governance to be reckoned with. “It was strange that several scholars have worked on his (Syed Ali Hamadan's) life and works, but no attempt had been made to examine his attitude towards politics, state, government, rulers and other functionaries,” complained a researcher. (32)

One of the significant aspects of Hamadani was that



despite being a Sufi working for the Kubarawi order, he did not make any attempt to shun politics or the government from his concerns of reformation. Hamadani, on the contrary, apart from writing on affairs of state, made personal contacts with the rulers of Kashmir. He had correspondence with Sultan Qutbu'd-Din, who became a disciple of him and wrote several verses in his honour. Before the departure of Sayyid Ali from Kashmir, the Sultan tried to persuade him to extend his stay in the Valley, but the Sayyid refused. However, he asked his disciple Maulana Muhammad Balkhi to guide the Sultan in matters pertaining to the shariah.”

Apart from taking an active interest in the economic affairs of the people, Hamadani considers that it is the quality of government that most of the problems of the people are solved with its attention. He says that one should recommend cases of the people to those who are in government, and one should not lose the recompense of such recommendations. (33)

Sayyid Ali Hamadani provided “advice and guidelines derived from the Quran and Sunnah” to the rulers for the smooth functioning of the state. (34)

Hamadani holds the Prophet as the father of international politics and a model of statesmanship for

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(*Bani-a-Siyasat-i-Aqwam*) all mankind. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) taught all of humanity the divine principles of state and its administration. He was a prophet and ruler. He established the first Islamic State in Medina. (35)

Thus, Hamadan's political thought is a part of his general philosophy, which is based on Shariah. Like al-Mawardi, he led a political life and never kept himself aloof from socio-political situations of his times. The question of ultimate end was a chief concern for him, and it is this question which dragged him into the discussion of political concepts like state, ruler, types of citizens and rights and duties of citizens. He based his politics on ethics like other Muslim theorists and did not differentiate between the two.” (36)

It was by dint of Hamadan's constructive intervention that he brought reconciliation between the Kashmiri and the Tughlaq armies at Firozpur in Punjab.” (37)

Afsar Khan included, perhaps for the same reason, Sayyid among the “three pioneer political theorists of the period of the Delhi Sultanate in their ethnic political discourses, i.e., Fakhr Mudabbir, Zainuddin Barani and Hamadani, and says:



“This essential theme continued to fascinate political theorists and writers on ethics in Mughal times.” (38)

However, Anees Saiyid opines that: -

“Zakhiratul-al-Muluk was not considered a standard text by the jurists and never served as a guide in the country, or even in Kashmir, where it was written.” (39)

But G.M.D. Sufi writes that “It was a favourite book with scholars during the pre-Mughal regime in India” (G.M.D. Sufi, Kashir; Lucknow, 1974, Vol. II p-90). Prof. Azizuddin says, In India and outside, one or more manuscript copies of Zakhiratul Muluk are available, while it is not the case with other works on political theory such as Adabul-al-Muluk and Fatawa-i-Jahan-dari.” (40)

Zakhiratul-al-Muluk was also translated into Latin in 1825 and into French in 1829. Such a large number of manuscript copies and its translation into foreign languages indicate the popularity and importance of this work. (41)

In this way Hamadani influenced Indian Muslim political thinkers, sultans and the ulama in a subtle manner. It was under the influence of the teachings of



Hamadani that Sultan Sikandar introduced Shariah in the administration of Kashmir during his reign. It was he who for the first time created the post of Shaikh ul Islam in Kashmir. (42)

Thus, Sayyid Ali Hamadani influenced the economic life and its multiple activities in Kashmir by stressing the need to earn by lawful means, which he considered “a form of prayer”, and created life in the Khanqah by keeping himself and his murids busy in some work during the daytime, and thus indirectly influenced the people in society, and they also started engaging themselves in some work. On the other hand, he not only wrote a guidebook for the rulers but also practically guided the affairs of state. Thus, his role was not confined to the theological aspects only but was well extended to the economic and political aspects of people as well.

Moreover, Syed Ali Hamadani was instrumental in bringing the Islamic Sufi legacy into fuller fruition in the mystical discourses of all the subsequent Sufis and Rishis of Kashmir. Mansur, being a father figure along with the stalwart Sufis like Abu Yazid, was made quite prominent by the Syed through his treatises and career. For example, Syed Ali Hamadani held that when a gnostic reaches the state of illumination, he sees God



everywhere; he sees the centre circle of the kingdom and angelic world (*moheetu dairah mulk wa malakut*), and he is not able to come out of it . He sees nothing except the dhat; he knows only the Absolute Real Being (*wajud-i-haqiqi mutlaq*). Now, if at this stage the claims like *subhani* [Bayazid Bistami] or *laisa fi dari an ghayri or laisa fi dari an ila rabbi* [Abul Abbas, Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdul Karim Aamili] seem quite possible. All the accidents and contingent things get extinguished here in the presence of the sparks of the light of the Grandeur of His Unity (*anwar-i-aaftab-i-jalal-i-ahdiat mustahlak yabad*). Even if it is said that I see everything and know everything from an angle, it is also true, because the perceiver is drowned in the perception of the being of someone who is the *wajud* of everything. (*zaira ki h au mustagraqi-mushadah -i-wajud kasay ast kih wajud hamah asha azust*) (43)

Hamadani has likened the heart to the niche, the vegetable soul to the lamp, the animal soul to the spark, the *nafsani* soul to the oil, the human soul to the light, and the prophetic soul to the light of the light, and the sacred soul (*Ruhul al qudusi*) is inclusive of all these. (44)

Syed Ali divided the recipients of “Divine Inspiration” into three categories.



Professor Rafiqi includes Mansur in the category of the Sufis “composed of those whose gnosis is based on mystical ecstasy (*shathi*).“ He is obviously thinking of the Sufis like Bayazid Bistami and Mansur al-Hallaj. (45)

Apart from the close acquaintance of the doctrines of *anal Haqq* of Mansur by Syed Ali Hamadani, we find that another Sufi from Kashmir, Shaikh Hamza, like the mystics Bayazid Bistami and Mansur Hallaj, was “transported in a state of mystical ecstasy called *sukr* (46).

For example, like Bayazid, he is reported to have cried out, “*Subhani! Ma azama shani*” (“Glory be to me! How great is my Majesty!” When asked to explain his utterance, the Shaikh replied, “One who makes such a statement gets identified with Essence.” (47)

He influenced the minds of the great majority of the people, including some of the Rishi saints of Kashmir. He created a bridge between the mainstream Sufism and Rishism and purified “some of the Rishi practices which, in his view, ran counter to the spirit of Islam”.

According to Dr Farooq Bukhari, the neo-Muslim Kashmiris needed the message of Islam in their own mother tongue, and for that purpose, Shaikh Nooruddin was selected for this job by Mir Muhammad

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Hamadani. He performed this job honestly and responsibly and achieved great success in this job. About the relations of Sufis and Rishis, Prof Khan says,

“The Kubarawis, the Suhrawardis and the Naqashbandis were so impressed by the Sharia-orientated asceticism of the Rishis that they perceived their movement to be a powerful instrument for generating a momentum of change, essentially from within, on the basis of Islamic teachings. The synthesis of the Rishi and the exogenous Islamic mystic traditions thus created conditions for the gradual eclipse of the local Hindu –Buddhist practices in Kashmir; by the end of the eighteenth century, we hear very little about the Rishis practising celibacy, abstinence from meat or even seclusion in caves, forests or on tops of the mountains.”
(48)

Furthermore, Gawhar is of the view that Nooruddin is the heir to the classic intellectual and gnostic legacy of Islamic legendary mystics.

Therefore, his knowledge about Mansur is based on his vast erudition of the Islamic mystical scholarship and not merely on coincidence. It should not be supposed that Nooruddin demanded of a Muslim the denial of Mansur al-Hallaj, but an alert, rationally controlled patterning of life according to the Shariah.



Here also the influence of Hamadani and other Kubarawi Sufis seems most glaringly present. Not unlike some great Sufis of Islam, he offered a fascinating explanation of Ana al-Haqq. Significantly, he seems to have understood Mansur from the standpoint of the *Wahdat al-Shuhud*. Professor Khan thinks that Nooruddin rejected the renunciation in the characteristic style of a Sufi reformer, and he aimed at imparting a dynamism to his order which was close to the tradition going back to the sober Junayd-i-Baghdadi (d. 910) and the later exponent of *Wahdat al-Shuhud*, Ala al-Dawla Simnani (d. 1335). Nooruddin himself acknowledges his debt to the Kubarawi Sufis, whose order gives priority to the “way of Junayd” as the centre of the novice's education. (49)

Prof. Shad Ghulam Muhammad considered that in the poetry of Sheikh Nooruddin there is a limited expounding and support of *Wahdat Wajudi tawhid*. He thinks that both Lal Ded and Sheikh Nooruddin have got spiritual inspiration from the Amir, and the *tawhid i Shahudi* and *Tawhid i Wajudi* are both intermixed in their poetry, but under the influence of the Kubarawi order of Sufi, the influence of *Tawhid-Shahudi* is more prominent, as the impact of *Tawhid-Wajudi* is temporary, like a breeze of wind which touches momentarily their thoughts and perceptions. However,



it seems quite possible that its impact may be very deep, but later on, both have passed through this influence and have come out from the circle of adumbration to the stage of servitude. Because both of them lay stress on piety, chastisement of the carnal self, self-realisation and action. (50)

Moreover, after the Syeds, the Muslim Rishis under the influence of Syed Mohammad Hamadani continued the process of Islamisation of Kashmir, though some remnants of the past could not be shunned perfectly. (51)

References and Notes:

1- His name was Ali, and titles were Amir-e-Kabir, Ali Sa'ani, and Mir. Besides them, the Chroniclers had mentioned several other titles: Qutub-e-Zaman, Sheikh-e-Salikan-e-Jehan, Qutub-ul-Aqtab, Afzal-ul-Muhaq-e-qeen-o-Akmal-ul-Mudaq-e-qeen, Al-Sheikh-ul-Kamil, Akmal-ul-Muhaqqiq-ul-Hamadani, etc. He traced his patrimony through his father, Syed Shahab Uddin, to Imam Zain-ul-Abidein and finally to Hazrat Ali. His mother, Syeda Fatimah, with seventeen links, reached the Prophet (ﷺ). His date of birth is disputed. To some it is 12, Rajab-ul-Murajab 714 Hijri (12th October 1314), and to others it is 12, Rajab 713 (12th October 1313). Dr Farooq Bukhâri says

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that he was born on 12th Rajab-Ul-Murajab in 712 A.H. (i.e., 21st October 1312), *Kashmir Mein Islam –Manzar aur Pashmanzar*, Maktaba Ilm-o- Adab, Red Cross Road, Srinagar, 1998, p. 69. The latter date appears more probable.

2- Abdul Wahab Kashmiri, *Fatuhat-I- Kubarawiyah*,

3- *Risalat-I-Masturat*, *Khulasatul –al-Manaqib*

4- *Khulasatul –al-Manaqib* pp.72-75

5- Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir*, Bharatiya Publications, Delhi, nd p.35

6- Dr. Parvez Azkai, *Murawaji-Islam Dar Iran-I- Sagheer*, Persian, Hamadan, Iran

7- Prof. Shamsu'd-Din Ahmad, *Shah-I-Hamadan Hayat Aur Karnnamay* (Urdu) Shaykh Gh.Mohd.Srinagar, 1995, 135 and pp-193-274. Also see Tr. *Waqaat-I-Kashmir*, in notes and explanations (Dr. Shamsu'd-Din, Urdu) J and K, Kashmir Islamic Centre, Srinagar, April, 2001, pp273-274) accepted 'Azam Dedah-mari's view that three visits were made by Sayyid Ali Hamadani to Kashmir, i.e. second time the Sayyid came to Kashmir, during Qutbu'Dins reign in 781 A.H and stayed there for about six months, and third time in 785 A.H.Ibid.p.274



8- Ibid. p ,44, 19. *Tarikh-I-Hassan*, *Tarikh-I-Azami*, and *Tarikh-I-Syed ALI*

9-Mufti Muhammad. Maqbool, *Shah-I-Hamadan*, Srinagar, 1985 p.43

10- A.Q. Rafiqui, *Sufism in Kashmir*, Bhartia Publishing House, Delhi, p. XIV I. Muhibbul Hassan has described the status of religious personages and Sufis in mediaeval Kashmir. He writes: "The *Pirs* with their *Murids* formed an important group in mediaeval Kashmir and exercised greater influence on the social, religious, and cultural life of the country than the 'Ulama. They were looked upon with great reverence by all classes of people because of their great learning and piety, but above all because they were supposed to possess miraculous powers. They led a life of simplicity, but they did not renounce the world or isolate themselves from the people and their problems. On the contrary, most of them led a normal life, had wives and children, and took an active interest in the affairs of the community... The *Pir* lived in the *Khanqah*, built and endowed for him by the princes and nobles, with his family and his professional followers, who worshipped with him and were taught by him how to attain mystic experience. There was a simple initiation ceremony in which the disciple pledged devotion. After this he lived

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in close association with his *Pir* until he reached the higher stages of initiation, when he might go out to teach his master's way (*tariqa*) and make new disciples. When the *Pir* died, he was succeeded by a *Khalifa* who stood high among the disciples for his moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualities. Sometimes the hereditary principle was followed in making these appointments. The Khanqah also had an Imam whose duty was to lead the prayers.” Kashmir under the Sultans, Ali Mohammad and Sons, second edition introduced by H. N. Rafiabadi, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar. p-380

11-Muhibbul Hassan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, Srinagar, p-402

12-Syed Ali Hamadani, *Zakhiratul-AL-Maluk*, p119

13-Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, New Delhi, 1978, p-83

14-Syed Ali Hamadani, *Risalah-I-Fututia* O.R.D. Srinagar, 70b.

15-Ibid-71^a

16-Ibid.p72a

17-*Zakhiratul-AL-Maluk*, opt.cit.p-234



18-Ibid.

19-Syed Ali Hamadani, *Risalat-I-Akhlaqiah* p13a

20- *Zakhiratul –AL-Maluk* p-105

21-Mufti Muhammad. Maqbool, *Shah-I-Hamadan*, Srinagar, 1985 p.43

22-Syeda Zaffar, *Syed Ali Hamadani*, Gulshan Publications, Srinagar.1991, p.129

23-Mohd. Yasin, Madhavi Yasin, *Mysteries and Glimpses of Kashmir* Raj Publications Delhi, 1996 p.40

24- *Tarikh-I-Hassan* vol. PP 178 –197

25- Frank Ames, *The Kashmir Shawl and its Indo –French Influence*, Antique Collectors Club, Scotland, 1997,3rd.Ed.FN 16.

26-Ibid p- 17

27-Pandit Anand Koul, “*The Kashmir Shawl Trade*” in the new defunct East and West of Germany, 1915, p-30, quoted in *Islamic Culture in Kashmir*, G.M.D. Sufi, Light and life Publishers, New Delhi. 1979, p-233.

28- Ibid.p-233

29- The monthly, *Shirazah* (Urdu),Vol. 1,No. III, 1963



30- The monthly, Shirazah (Urdu)Vol. 1,No. III)
1963

31- Shirazah, Kashmiri Ajaibat Number, Cultural
Academy Srinagar

32-S.M. Kamaluddin Husain, Sahib-I-
Muwaddatul-Quraba, Maligaon, 1984. However, Dr.
Hayat Amir has dealt with the political thought of Mir
Syed Ali Hamadani in his book, *“The Religious Thought
of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani*, Al-Hamra publications,
Delhi, 1992, pp. 137-167

33- *Zakhiratul-Muluk*. National Museum
Manuscript,-- f.35a

34- Hayat Amir, p-147, op cit. P-147. Hayat Amir
equates Hamadani with Ibn Taimiyyah in this respect.

35- Ibid. P-148.

36- Ibid. Dr, Hayat Aamir.op.cit.p-174.

37-.M.D.Sofi, 195 (Muhiuddin - p-57)

38-Afsar Khan, Fatawa-i-Jahandari, Lahore, 1972,
p-71

39- State, Religion and Society in Medieval India,
Delhi, 1984, p-10

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40-An unpublished article of Prof. Azizuddin entitled “Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadan's Attitude towards Government, Rulers and Officers, in the Government, p-14.

41-Sofi op.cit. P 90

42-Prof. Azizuddin.op.cit.p-14. (Dr. Parvez Azkai, *Murawaju Islam dar Iran-i-Sagheer Ahwal wa athar Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, with Risalah-i-Hamadāniyah*, Intisharat-i-Danish-gah-i-Bu Ali Sina, Hamadan Iran,1370,A.H,pp141-145)

43-Dr Azkai includes Mansur among those Gnostics who said such *shattihat*. Ibid .p-174, foot note no. V11

44-Nooruddin Badakshi, (edited by Dr Syeda Ashraf Zaffar) *Khulasatul-al-Manaqib dar Manaqib Mir Syed Ali Hamadani*, Markazi-i-Tahqeeqat-i-Farsi Iran wa Pakistan, Islamabad, 1995, p-142

45-Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir* (Fourteenth tom the Sixteenth century) Al-Rafiqui Publishing House ,73,Balgarden ,Karannagar,Srinagar ,second edition,2003,p-54 .

46-Ibid.Rafiqui op.citp-25

47-Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir*

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(Fourteenth tom the Sixteenth century) Al-Rafiqui Publishing House, 73, Balgarden, Karannagar, Srinagar ,second edition,2003,p-54

48- *Kashmir's Transition to Islam, The Role of Muslim Rishis*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1994 P-223

49-Transition-op.cit.p-223

50- Ghulam Muhammad Shad, *Kasmitri-Sufi Shairi and Syed Ali Hamadani*, edited Andrabi and Tak J&K Academy for Art Culture and Languages, Srinagar, *Shāh-e-Hamadān* special, vol. 35, No,-1-3pp-149-150.

51-For example, the practices prevalent during the Hindu period were allowed to continue as has been put by Ishaq Khan in a scholarly manner thus, '...through the Rishis, [Islam] allowed the main configuration of pre-existing Kashmiri popular religion to adapt itself to the wider Islamic framework. However, the Suhrawardy, Naqshbandi and Qadiri Sufi Orders have also played a very great role in the process of Islamisation of Kashmir. Moreover, the localized Rishi version of Sufi teachings, and a central figure in this regard was Sheikh Nooruddin, popularly known as Nunda Rishi took this process to its logical conclusion.



The Lasting Impact of Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadāni on Kashmir

Dr. Mohd Iqbal Rather

Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, who lived during the eighth century A.H., was a saintly person, a reformer, a visionary, a great writer and a distinguished political theorist. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani came to Kashmir from Central Asia (present-day Iran); he played a tremendous role and had a marvellous impact in reviving the caste-ridden society of Kashmir. Hamadani's arrival in Kashmir has marked the start of a new era in the history of Kashmir. His arrival in Kashmir has influenced almost all the spheres of human life. His untiring and indefatigable efforts in transforming this society are unparalleled. Be it religious or spiritual, social or political, or economic aspects of life, his noble arrival

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reframed every action and completely changed the landscape of Kashmiri civilisation. (1)

However, when it comes to Kashmir and more specifically “Islam in Kashmir”, the influence and impact of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani cannot be undermined. He is the man who introduced Kashmir to the industry of arts and crafts, which boosted the economy of Kashmir drastically. He modified the political codifications of the valley by advising and giving counsel to the kings and Salā in of the valley. He was the only preacher of Islam in Kashmir and Baltistan who brought a clandestine change in the lifestyles of people living in this part of the world. He infused Islamic values in the lives of natives there, promoted the Islamic culture and introduced Persian arts and crafts in the valley in order to break the economic stagnation of the valley. (2)

Religious and Political Impact

Before discussing the impact of Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani on Kashmir, it is plausible to have a cursory look at the role of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in the process of Islamisation of Kashmir. In the twelfth century, Kashmir was predominantly a Hindu society with “not a space as a grain of sesame without a Tirtha, [places of religious sanctity for Hindus].” (3) However, with the advancement of time, history witnessed Islam having



replaced Hinduism as a mass religion of the valley to the extent that, according to the contemporary Sanskrit chronicle Srivara, “the Brahman boys are fond of the Muslims and are ashamed to follow the Shastra which was followed by their fathers and grandfathers.” (4) Indeed, conversion to Islam in Kashmir is a complex subject and needs enormous study, and in fact, it forms an interesting issue for the research. This process did not happen out of the blue; it took more than three centuries to embrace far-reaching changes in different spheres of life, marking one phase off from the other. (5) The history of the spread of Islam in Kashmir does not originate with the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir in 1339 C.E., but the presence of Muslims in Kashmir dates back to the eighth century C.E. The famous French scholar, Louis Massignon, author of the celebrated book *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* (originally written in French), provides the revealing information that Mansur al-Ḥallāj, the great mystic of Islam, visited Kashmir in 895 C.E. and stayed there for one year. (6)

There is much evidence to prove the presence of Muslims in Kashmir since the 8th century C.E., as mentioned in *Chach Namah*, that a Muslim, namely Muḥammad Alāfi, served Raja Dāhir (7) and later on, his son Jaysiah, as a reliable advisor and received great respect in the court. (8) On the account of Kalhana,

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Muslims participated in wars along with the Hindus during the reign of Jayasimha (ruled 1128-49 C.E.). (9) Mahmud Ghazni's victory over the Hindu Raja of Kashmir in 1050 C.E. would also have opened up the gates for Muslims to visit Kashmir. The streaming of Muslims into Kashmir continued unabated till the Muslim sultanate was finally established in 1339 C.E. Since the Hindu rulers greatly depended upon the support of the Muslim commanders and the neighbouring Muslim rulers, Islam did not encounter a hostile political climate in Kashmir. This naturally encouraged Muslim preachers to enter the beautiful valley of Kashmir to carry on the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

The first preacher, the missionary of Islam who entered Kashmir, was Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Abd'l Raḥmān (10), commonly known in Kashmir as Bulbul Shah. (11)

“Bul Bul Shah, on the advice of his preceptor... according to his own capacity for the promotion and propagation of Islam, came to Kashmir during the reign of Suha Dev.” (12)

He entered Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva (ruled from 1301 to 1320). He was instrumental in converting the reigning Buddhist ruler of Kashmir,

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Rinchana (1320-1323 C.E.), to Islam and was named Sultan Sadru Din. This conversion marked a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir. This is besides the fact that

Conversion of the ruler would have validated the religious superiority of Islam. This conversion, as publicised by many biased historians, was not a coincidence (13), but it should be borne in mind that Sultan Sadr U din held discussions with Hindus and Buddhists and was not convinced by their arguments, and when he encountered Bulbul Shah, he held a detailed discussion with him and got satisfying answers to his questions and embraced Islam. (14) Abu'l Fazl, in his voluminous book Aini Akbari, reiterates that “Rinjan (15) adopted Islam because of his affection and intimacy with Shah Mir, who was a minister in his court and had cordial relations with him.” (16) According to Sufi, Sultan Şadr al-Dīn actually owed his conversion to Bulbul Shah, and one of his Persian couplets validates this assertion. (17)

The conversion of Rinchana gave Islam a state patronage in Kashmir. However, that does not mean people were forced to accept Islam. Kalhana elaborates the arrival of Islam in Kashmir as:



“Islam made its way into Kashmir not by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion, for which the influx of foreign adventurers both from the south and from Central Asia had prepared the ground. The adoption of Islam by the great mass of the population began towards the close of Hindu rule and became an accomplished fact during the latter half of the fourteenth century. (18)

Islam on its arrival in Kashmir did not intend to change the political scenario of Kashmir. Its main aim and objective were to change the condition of the human beings. Bulbul Shah had already started this marvellous task and was successful in the influx of Islam in Kashmir. The process of Islamisation in Kashmir, which was furthered by Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, his son, and their followers, needs to be highlighted, not only in the perspective of their missionary zeal to increase the number of converts but also in the context of their deep concern for the observance of the Islamic law in a land where Islam has already entered but the norms of Shari'ah were being violated. Thus, their aim was not only to convert afresh but also to consolidate the foothold already gained. (19)

There was a pause in the process of Islamisation of Kashmir, which was resumed with full vigour and further encouraged by the arrival of the Sādāt (Pl. of



Sayyid). (20) Backed by the argument, it appears that these noble persons were on a mission to Kashmir deputed by Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani as an advance party to survey the field for propagation of Islam. (21) Wani accounts that Hamadani himself was waiting at Ghuar (Afghanistan) for a reply from these envoys. (22) After informing Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani of the conducive atmosphere for carrying on the peaceful propagation in Kashmir, all four, along with their followers, made up their minds to settle there in the valley. They were warmly welcomed by the king, and for their comfort and well-being, he started monetary compensations for them. At the request of the then sultan of Kashmir, Sultan Shihāb al-Din, Sayyid Taj-ud-Din and his son Sayyid Hassan stayed in the capital of Kashmir, Srinagar, and with the help of the sultan, established schools (maktab), Khānqāh, and constructed a graveyard in the capital city. Simultaneously, Sayyid Ḥussāin Simnāni and his nephew Sayyid Ḥāīdar settled in Kulgam and erected a Khānqāh. (23) It is important to mention here that the credit for converting the father of revered patron Sufi saint of Kashmir Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Nurani (1379-1442 C.E.) goes to Sayyid Ḥussāin Simnāni. (24) It was only for the religious propagation that Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani came to Kashmir. Some historians are of the view that he came to Kashmir because of Timūr's threat,



which has been contradicted by many historians. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and his companions were not the only persons to leave Persia. It was their Sheikh 'Alā'u Daulah Simnāni's order to all his disciples who lived in his Khānqāh to travel extensively throughout the world to propagate religion. (25) However, it is of high importance that before the arrival of Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, Muslim rulers of Kashmir were not much interested in propagating their professed religion. (26) He came to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Shihāb al-Din (ruled from 1355 to 1373 C.E.); the sultan was not present in Kashmir on Hamadani's arrival; he had gone out on an expedition against the ruler of Ohind (27). Sultan Qutb ud-Din was acting on his part, and he received Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani with great respect, and after the stay of four months there in Kashmir, Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani left for the battleground and persuaded both armies to come to peace. (28)

Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani's arrival in Kashmir has great importance as far as Islam in Kashmir is concerned. His arrival gave a great impetus to the mission already started by Bulbul Shah, Taj-ud-Din, Sayyid Ḥussaīn Simnāni and others. It is pertinent to quote Wani here when he says:



“There is, however, little doubt that even after the lapse of fifty years since the establishment of the Muslim sultanate and in spite of the presence of the Muslim preachers for a pretty long time, the Muslims still formed the microscopic minority of Kashmir. And what is more, their life pattern, including that of the ruling family, was not different from that of the Hindus. The Muslim community had virtually adopted a Hindu way of life.” (29)

When Hamadani visited Kashmir a second time during the reign of Sultan Quṭb Al-Din (ruled from 1373 to 1389 C.E.), he was received with great fervour, and the Sultan himself came to receive him. But despite all this, the condition was unfavourable. There was no one who could dare to warn people against the prohibited and incline them towards the good. As mentioned in Baharistani Shahi,

“In those days none of the 'Ulamā and men of learning in Kashmir preached religion without hypocrisy. The Qāḍī and the theologians of those days paid scant attention to things permitted or prohibited [in the Islamic religion] because the teachings of the Islamic faith had not been enforced fully.” (30)

Anti-Shariyah practices were so prevalent that Sultan Quṭb al-Din was enjoying marital relations with



two uterine sisters, and when Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani came to know about it, he warned the king about the prohibitions in Shari'ah, and with his admonition, the sultan divorced one of his wives. Sultan Quṭb al-Din also used to dress the way non-Muslims did, and on the advice of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, he abandoned that attire and adopted the dress code nearer to Islamic teachings. (31) Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, who rejected all the monetary compensations and gifts from the sultan and earned his livelihood through cap-making, presented a cap made by him to Sultan Quṭb al-Din as a token of love; the sultan considered it as a mark of exaltation and used to wear it under his crown. The succeeding rulers of the Muslim Sultanate followed this routine until Sultan Fatah Shah, before his death, made a will that this cap should be buried with his shroud. (32) Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani held discussions with Brahman priests, convinced them with an argument and converted them with their followers to the ranks of Islam. One of the significant aspects of Hamadani was that despite being a Sufi, he did not alienate himself from politics or the government. He, apart from writing on political affairs of state, personally contacted the rulers of Kashmir. (33) Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani provided advice and guidelines derived from the Quran and Sunnah to rulers for the smooth functioning of the state. (34)



Hamadani has also written several letters to some rulers of his time, giving them advice regarding good polity. (35)

Thus, Hamadani's political thought is a part of his ethical and religious philosophy, which is based on Shari'ah. Like Imām al Ghazali, he in all ways tried to guide the Salāṭin and kings in all the matters related to socio-political situations of the time. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani is one of the greatest but less explored Muslim political theologians who needs to be studied in a better way to help us in developing contemporary Muslim political theology. A better assessment and analysis of his writings, especially his *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* and *Maktūbāt* that are considered to be the key sources exploring his political theology. (36) The question of ultimate end was chief concern for him, and it is this thing, which motivated him to write his magnum opus, *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*. (37) Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani was very serious regarding the moral policing of the people. The political institution for Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani was a divine programme to save the weak from the strong, dispense justice, symbolise a generous attitude towards subjects and do *I s̄ān*. He, in a clear voice, differentiates satanic kings from deputies of Allah and denounces the former. Hamadani's ideas of political philosophy assert that a ruler must secure the



basic needs of subjects. (38) The introduction of Awrād-i Fathīyyah in Kashmir and its enchanting aloud in the mosques and Khānqāh's of Kashmir have proved beneficial for the propagation of Islam and infusing the laws of the Shari'ah in Kashmir. This process is still going on in Kashmir, and after fajr prayers (early dawn prayers) every day, almost in all the mosques of Kashmir, Awrād-i Fathīyyah is being recited in a congregation, and being a witness to this, I can really say that this is heart-ravishing and soul-soothing.

Social and Economic Impact

There is no doubt that Islam in Kashmir received great impetus because of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and his followers. Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, accompanied by his disciples, travelled widely throughout the valley. He left his disciples at a number of places, which were great Hindu centres of those days, such as Pampora, Awantipora and Bijbihara of present days. These followers of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani established Khānqāhs and started preaching Islam. (39)

Sufis played a great role in the revival and reformation of the societies throughout the history of the Muslim world. Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani is one among those great social reformers. He was a pioneer in reviving the caste-ridden society of Kashmir and



The people of Kashmir have great reverence for this noble soul. He not only transformed the 14th-century caste-ridden society of Kashmir but also gave a sound social, economic and spiritual base to the people of Kashmir for their firm standing in the world. He used Islamic ethos as a means of human development. (40)

Besides being an 'Ālim and a Sufi, Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani was an influential political thinker and a reformer of high repute. His impact on all sections of society was primarily due to the efficacy of his highly pious character and his views regarding

religion, ethics and politics. He laid great emphasis upon earning one's livelihood and stressed the self-dependence of the individuals so far as the economic aspect is concerned. (41) Hamadani rejected the monetary compensations and gifts from the kings and met his daily needs by cap-making. He encouraged his Murīds (disciples) to be economically self-sufficient. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani was against the conventionally idle Khānqāhi life because he was of the view that it would isolate a Sufi from the society. (42) Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani was an expert "Sozan kar" (needle worker) himself, and his dedication and commitment to this art can be seen when he established the handicraft industry in Kashmir. Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, with these heart-

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ravishing and captivating arts, made Kashmir a miniature Iran (Iran-i- agīr). (43) Shawl Bafi (Shawl making) is still known in Kashmir as Kār-i-Amirī, undoubtedly because of its relation with Amir-i-Kabīr. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani was instrumental in not only reviving the shawl industry, but he also made efforts to intensify other local Kashmiri and Iranian crafts. Thus, apart from bringing new sciences, cultures and values from Iran to Kashmir, Hamadani created a different environment in Kashmir by promoting these arts there. 'Alāmā Iqbal, in the reverence of this legend, has rightly said that:

خطہ را آں شاہ دریا استین
داد علم و صنعت و تہذیب و دین

(A king ocean-munificent, to that vale, he gave sciences, crafts, education, and religion.) (44)

It is stated that Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 1379 C.E. founded the shawl industry in Kashmir. The shawl industry did not exist before the thirteenth century, for there is no reference to it either in Rajtarngni or any other source, and it was further developed under the patronage of the Salā in of the Shah Mir dynasty with the help of weavers who came from Persia and Turkistan.” (45) Kashmir has been recognised for its arts and crafts throughout history. The arts and crafts



introduced or developed in Kashmir by Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani or his followers are textiles of fleecy-soft texture, delicate embroidery work in silk and wool, and handwoven carpets of

finest warp and woof, lovely painting in wonderful designs on paper mache goods or on wood, fine tracteries in wood carving, deft weaving in willow-wicker, and superb metal work. Of the cottage industries, the most flourishing is that of wood-carving, which is not only beautiful but also of great utility, which finds its market throughout the world. (46)

Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, with the help of his companions, set up an example of a high moral code for the Muslims and the other members of the society. He encouraged the study of Persian literature so that the people of Kashmir have better access to the literature produced by the giants of Persia and Central Asia. Hamadani established the first manuscript library at Srinagar in Kashmir. (47) He possessed vast knowledge, wisdom and understanding. His disciples were practical men who worked hard to meet their daily needs, and simultaneously they gave their best to the valley, whether it was religion, learning, culture, or art. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani took great interest in social service like other Sufis and was of the opinion that Muslims should



limit their desires according to the dictates of Islam, but they should not annihilate them like sanyasis. (48) The culture of hard work and cooperation promoted by Hamadani was a kind of encouragement for neo-Muslims. This encouraged them to work hard for their families and made them economically sound. This established a society within a society where the Brahminic notions of casteism had no place. This economic and social order greatly influenced the Hindus, and they found solace in the freedom of the message of equality in Islam and joined the ranks of Islam. (49)

The Khānqāhs built by Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani or his companions were the spearheads of Muslim culture in mediaeval Kashmir. In Kashmir, there are four major Khānqāhs (hospices) attributed to the Shah-i Hamadan: the Khānqāh-i Mu'alla of Srinagar, Tral, Doru and Shey (Ladakh). There also are several lesser-known hospices of the Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, which are situated at Sopore and Pampore.

The Khānqāh-i Mu'alla is a beautiful model of wooden architecture, with engravings on walls. The sacred relics, including the Prophet's flag, the pillar of the Prophet's tent, and Shāh-e-Hamadān's walking stick, are housed in this hospice. During his life the place

acquired the credit of being the centre of religious learning and spiritual enlightenment. (50)

Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani influenced the economic sphere and its multiple activities in Kashmir by stressing the need to earn by lawful means, which he

considered as a part of religion. He broke down the shackles of economic stagnation in Kashmir. He built Khānqāh, where his disciples remained engrossed in some or other work during the daytime, and this indirectly influenced the people living in the society and encouraged them to strive for lawful means of income. He stressed the economic autonomy of the 'Ulamā' and was of the view that religion should in no way be dependent on the kingship. He suggested that 'Ulamā' should not work under the influence of the kings because if so, the kings can misuse the religion according to their own wishes. (51)

During the mediaeval period of Islamic history, Islam excelled in all the fields of knowledge, and Central Asia, being part of the Islamic world, adopted the legacy and became the pioneer of medical sciences. Their research on medicine was purely based on the old 'Greek medicine', and they continued their research and touched new heights. They developed new techniques related to the diagnosis of diseases and treatment of



physical and psychological ailments. It was because of cultural and civilisational exchanges between Kashmir and Central Asia in general and Iran in particular that Iranian medicine came to Kashmir, and imprints of this exchange are still visible on the contours of Kashmiri society. Moreover, the doctors dealing with this medicine are still working in Kashmir and are known as 'akīm'. When Kashmiris encountered Iranian medicine, they showed it a new dimension and started preparing new medicines at their homes, as Kashmir is the treasure of natural resources and made

them available for the common masses. (52) Furthermore, it is documented that during the Sultanate period, many renowned physicians and the books related to medicine and its allied subjects were brought to Kashmir from Central Asian countries, and many hospitals were established for the welfare of the people. Extensive research on the existing literature of medicine was carried out during the sultanate period, and many books related to medicine were translated into Persian. (53)

Kashmiris wholeheartedly welcomed all the new things, whether related to arts, crafts, medicine, politics, language, etc. Besides medicine, there were many new arts and crafts which landed in Kashmir with the arrival



of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and his men and were welcomed by the people. These arts and crafts helped in a better way to accelerate the economic stagnation of Kashmir. The new arts introduced were painting, amām dāri, kafsh dozī, dozandgī, kabāb pazi, harīsā pāzi, alwa pazi, gilkāri, zargarī, ahāfi, qālīn bāfi, kāgaz sāzī, qalamdān sāzī, akāki, sozan kāri, pashmin sāzī, and jild sazi. Among these crafts, some were already prevailing in Kashmir but were at the state of decline. They were developed and refurnished by the Central Asian craftsmen and were learnt by the Kashmiris. But some arts and crafts were not present in Kashmir and were introduced in Kashmir by the craftsmen who came from different parts of Central Asian countries and were learnt by the Kashmiris in such a way that it seems that Kashmiris were the ones who developed these crafts. With the state patronage, these crafts touched new heights. Pashim sazi, which includes pashmina, tafta and shah tous, are the crafts which have high market value even in the present world and are famous and available in the international markets throughout the globe. (54) The handmade items produced by the artisans of Kashmir are unparalleled to none in the world. In the art of painting, paper mache has made its place in the world markets. The namda, shawl, qalin, and sozan qari items of Kashmir are of high repute in the



markets of Asian countries. (55) The history of Qalin bafi in Iran is very old, and with the arrival of Hamadani in Kashmir, this art paved its way to the valley of Kashmir. With the help of Iranian artisans, Kashmiris learnt this art so fast that they became the masters of it, and the qalin of Kashmir is ranked second in the world markets. (56) When it comes to wood-carving, especially engraving of designs, Kashmiri artisans with the quality of their good work are famous in the world. Even scholars are of the opinion that while talking of wood carving, it starts in Kashmir and ends up there. Calligraphy was very famous during the mediaeval period, and the Iranians and the Central Asians were fond of these arts. With the arrival of Hamadani and his men in Kashmir, this art came to Kashmir and, under state patronage, flourished very much. (57)

The emergence of Islam and the arrival of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in Kashmir transformed the Kashmiri society, and a new Kashmir came into being. This Kashmir was blooming and blossoming with the introduction of new sciences, arts and crafts. However, Kashmir maintained its speciality in all fields. In the field of constructions, Kashmir retained its own way and, to some extent, adopted the Iranian patterns. The Khānqāh's established during or after the arrival of Hamadani in Kashmir were the centres of Islamic



learning. The Khānqāh's were established on the pattern of prevalent Kashmiri architectural patterns. The roofs of these Khānqāhs resemble the design of Buddhist monasteries, which highlights the peaceful atmosphere and harmony created by the Muslim sultanate, which is the pivotal point of the Islamic political system. (58) Apart from culture, the traits of Kashmiri literary life were also influenced greatly by the arrival of Sayyid 'Ali to Kashmir. From Central Asia, Kashmir welcomed all, which was good, and in the field of literary arts, Kashmir received the popular genres like ghazal, qa īdah, marthiya, rubā'ī, mathnawī, na't and manqabat. Prior to the cultural exchange, the genres available in Kashmir were vākh, wathsun and shrukh. (59)

The arrival of the Sufis, traders, and artisans from Iran and Central Asia not only influenced the artistic nature of Kashmir, but their influence and impact are also evident in the culture and the language of Kashmir. The Persian language met the beauty of Kashmir before the arrival of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and his companions and started to make its way in the culture of Kashmir. However, this had not reached the optimum of its impact, so the arrival of Hamadani and others from Central Asian countries furthered it and made it the state language. Kashmir was the first country in Asia where Islam was introduced by the Persians, and being



Shah-i Hamadan, the ambassador of Iran, he not only introduced the new religion (Islam) in Kashmir, but with this, he introduced the culture and language of Iran in Kashmir. The Persian language made its grounds firm in Kashmir, and all the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir accepted it wholeheartedly. The literature produced in Kashmir during the mediaeval period was in the Persian language. (60)

The impact of Central Asia in general and Iran in particular on the polity, economy, art, culture and all other spheres of life is evident in Kashmir, but with the emergence of Dogra rule in Kashmir, the demography of Kashmir was changed completely. Kashmir was under a tyrant and unjust rule. Lawlessness became the order of the day. (61) However, the impact of the Persian language has been so firm on Kashmir that until the early seventies of the twentieth century, the court formalities continued to be in the Persian language, and in the revenue department, the old records are still preserved in the Persian language. (62)

Summing up the things, we can say that there is a particular category of people in human history who always remain relevant, and Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani is one of them. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani means a lot to Kashmir; generations have paid tribute to him, and generations to



follow would keep on remembering him. There are many things attributed to him; stabilising the polity of Kashmir would remain the prime one. (63) The arrival of this great scholar marked the dawn of a new era in the sense that the socio- socio-political scenario of Kashmir took a consequential turn, and a process of social, religious, economic and political regeneration began to emerge as a result of his command over all kinds of social, political and cultural evils. The year of his arrival is considered a historical year for Kashmir because this great soul for the cause of Islam sanctified the 'terra firma' of Kashmir and left no stone unturned in spreading the divine message of Islam everywhere and stimulating the population with the true spirit of the complete way of life. (64)

The chain of Sufis associated with Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani accelerated the process of Islamisation of Kashmir. The tradition of mixing with the rulers and taking part in political affairs was established by the early Suhrawardi and Kubravi saints; they believed that by associating themselves directly or indirectly with royal courts, they could change the outlook of rulers. In the process of Islamisation, the establishment of Khānqāh helped in the dissemination of Islamic spiritual and intellectual values. The interest that Sufis evinced in the welfare of the people in general must have



also helped them to attract non-Muslims to the ranks of Islam. Highlighting the socio-political views of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, it may be assumed that he favours the existence of a welfare state based on Islamic principles. (65) According to Hamadani, a tyrant has no right to rule a state. He said it is the duty of a ruler to protect the lives and property of his subjects, both Muslims and non-Muslims. However, though history bears testimony to the fact that the Muslim rulers of Kashmir who promoted different arts and crafts can easily be attributed to Sufis in general and Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in particular, as they opened the gate of interaction between Iran and Kashmir in a manner which has no example. However, there is no doubt that Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani left deep imprints on the religious history of Kashmir, and his teachings and writings were a great source of inspiration not only to his disciples but also to the subsequent generations as well.

Notes & References:

1. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, "Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA): His Influence on Life and Society of Kashmir" Peace Watch, 2012, Issue 4, P. 1
2. Ibid.
3. Kalhana Pandit, Rajtarangini, Tr. into English by

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M. A. Stein, Westminster, Vol. 1, Book I, N.D., p. 9
(hereafter cited as Kalhana)

4. Srivara Jaina, Rajtarangni, Tr. into English by J. C. Dutt, pp. 319-20, c.f., M. Ashraf Wani, Islam in Kashmir (14th to 16th Century), Srinagar: Orient Publishing House, 2004, p. IV

5. Wani, op. cit., p. IX

6. Louis Massignon, The Passion of Al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 95

7. Rājā Dāhir (663 – 712 AD) was the last Hindu ruler of Sindh. He presided over the Pushkarna Brahmin dynasty of Sindh, which included territories that now constitute parts of the modern-day states of Afghanistan, the Baluchistan region of Iran and Pakistan, and parts of Punjab. In 711 AD, his kingdom was conquered by Muhammad bin Qāsim, an Arab general, for the Umayyad Caliphate. He was killed in the Battle of Aror at the banks of the River Indus, near modern-day Nawabshah. He ruled for 32 years on Sindh.

8. Anonymous, Fata Nāmah Sind (Chuch-Nama), rendered by Nabī Bakhsh Khan Bloch, Sindhi Arabi Board, 2008, pp. 99-100, 178-179; Chuch-Nama is the

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Persian translation of the extinct Arabic Futuh hu Sind by 'Alī Ibn āmid Ibn Abu Bakr Kūfī. The Persian translation was made in 613 A.H./1216 C.E., during the time of the ruler of Sind, Amir Qubucha, the rival and contemporary of Iltutmish of Delhi. However, scholars like M.A. Wani has the evidential proof to reject this theory for more information see Wani, op. cit., p. 45

9. Kalhana, Vol. II, p. 175; Kalhana has used the term Yavana to represent the Muslims. For more information see foot note no 2264 of Kalhana, Vol. II, book VIII, p. 175

10. Sayyid Sharaf al Dīn Abd'l Rahman was the disciple of Shah N'imat Allah Farsi, who in turn was the disciple of Sheikh Shihāb al-Din Suhrawardi the founder of Suhrawardi Sufi order in Islam (1144-1234 C.E.).

11. A. Q. Rafiqi, Sufism in Kashmir (14th to 16th Century). Srinagar, Kashmir: Crown printing Press, 2003, p. 20 (here after cited as Rafiqui 2003,)

12. Khawaja Muhammad Azam Didmari, Waqat-i-Kashmiri, ND, ff. 40-41

13. The story about the Rinchana's conversion seems fabricated by Jonaraja out of bitterness that Rinchana had accepted Islam. In fact, if Rinchana wished to

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become Hindu, there should have been no difficulty for him, especially when he was a king. Even if Devasvamī has refused to initiate Rinchana into Hinduism, he could have asked some other Brahmin to do so. Long before Rinchana came to throne, Mihirakula of the white Hun stock is said to have been converted into Hinduism or vice versa was not a new thing. According to popular versions of the story, supported by most of the medieval Muslim scholars of Kashmir Rinchana has accepted Islam because of “the Divine grace” it is held that after Rinchana came to the throne he held discussions with both the Hindus and Buddhist priests, in order to ascertain the “Truth” but none could satisfy him. For more information see Rafiqui 2003, op. cit., p. 9

14. Wani, op. cit., p.55; also see K. N. Pandit, *Baharistan –i-Shahi*, Firma KLM Private Ltd, 1991, P. 21

15. By 'Rinjin' he means Rinchana who later on came to be known as Sultan Sadru Din.

16. Abul Fazl Allami, *The Aini Akbari*, Tr. into English by Colonel H. S. Jarrett, India: Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. II, 1891, P. 386

17. Baba Dawood Mishkati, *Asrar Al Abrar*, Tr. into Urdu as *Riyaz al-Akhyar* by Sharif Ahmad, ... p. 71

18. Kalhana, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 1300



19. Mohammad Ishaq Khan, “The Impact of Islam on Kashmir in the Sultanate Period (1320- 1586)”, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Sage Journal, Volume 23, Issue 2, June 1986, p. 189; (hereafter cited as Khan 1986)

20. By Sādāt here I mean those who were sent by Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani to Kashmir before his arrival to see whether the conditions are favorable for his arrival or to prepare grounds for his arrival. The names of the persons differ as M.A.Wani and G.M.D. Sofi's books are concerned. M.A. Wani lists them as Sayyid Hussain Simnani, Sayyid Taj-ud-Din, Sayyid Hassan Bahadur and Sayyid Haider. Sayyid Hussain Simnani and Sayyid taj-ud-Din were the cousins of Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani.

21. G.M.D Sufi, *Kashīr: Being a History of Kashmir*, Vol. I, Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1974, p. 84

22. Wani, op. cit., p. 56

23. Ibid., pp. 57-58

24. Mohammad Ishaq khan, *Kashmir's transition to Islam: The Role of Muslim Rishis (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Century)*, Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1994, p.64 (here after cited as Khan 1994)



25. Ghulam Sarwar Lahori, *Khazinat al- Asfiyah*, Samarkand, ND, Vol. II, p. 294

26. Muhammad Ishaq Khan, “Studying conversions to Islam in Indian history—a Case Study”, *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs. Journal*, Vol. 12:1, 1991, p. 153 (here after cited as Khan 1991); Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and his associates must have been attracted to Kashmir because Muslim rule was newly established there and offered considerable opportunities for popularizing and propagating Islam. For more information see Rafiqui 2003, op. cit., p. 34

27. Ohind has been mistaken as Hind by the historians so it is important to mention here that Ohind is a place at 16 KMs above Attock and Attock Khurd is a small town located on the River Indus in the Attock District of Punjab, Pakistan. Historically and strategically, Attock Khurd is considered the gateway to Central Asia since it is near Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa border.

28. Sofi, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 86, however, as already mentioned there is a lot of discussion regarding the first two travels and many of the chronicles of the medieval period like *Aini Akbari* mentions only one visit and scholars are not even unanimous on the date of the last visit, which was during the reign of sultan Quṭb Al-Din.

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Rafqui has extensively discussed this issue. See Rafqui 2003, op. cit., pp. 34-36

29. Wani, op. cit., p. 58

30. Pandit, op. cit., p. 33

31. Ibid.

32. Muhibul Hassan, Kashmir Under sultans, Calcutta, Iran Society, 1959, p. 57; It is said that when a Dervish a saintly person heard that the cap had been buried with Fateh Shah's body, he prophesied that this would mean the end of the Shah Mir dynasty. Sayyida Ashraf Zafar, Sayyid Mir 'Ali Hamadani, Delhi: Shariq Book Depot, 1987, p. 130

33. Khan 1994, op. cit., p. 68

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The Alleged Forced Conversions and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Islam is the second largest religion in the world today, with 1.97 billion adherents – that is about 25% of the world population. Moreover, it is the most widely practised religion in the world as well. From mediaeval times to the present day, the scholars have tried to find out the reasons for the miraculous rapid growth of Islam; some Orientalists have opined that throughout history, Islam was able to expand itself by resorting to coercion and forcible conversions. However, an unbiased and objective study reveals that Islam has been influencing the hearts and minds of people in different parts of the world on the basis of its practical teachings and its capabilities to offer better prospects of life to its



adherents. One should remember that a religion may attain temporal hegemony for some time, but it cannot perpetuate itself without its own merits. The famous British orientalist and historian T. W. Arnold writes,

"...It is the spirit of truth in the hearts of believers which cannot rest unless it manifests itself in thought, word and deed, which is not satisfied till it has carried its message to every human soul, till what it believes to be the truth is accepted as the truth by all members of the human family. It is such a zeal for the truth of their religion that has inspired the Muhammadans to carry with them the message of Islam to the people of every land into which they penetrate and that justly claims for their religion a place among those we term missionary. It is the history of the birth of this missionary zeal, its inspiring forces and the modes of its activity that forms the subject of the following pages. The 200 million Muhammadans scattered over the world at the present day are evidence of its workings through the length of thirteen centuries." (The Preaching of Islam, Page: 10)

In fact, Mahatma Gandhi says,

"I wanted to know the best of the life of one (Muhammad) who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind. I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a



place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, and his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle."

Actually, Islam urges its believers to carry forward the message of Islam with knowledge and wisdom so that the people may turn towards the religion. The Quran says,

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity." (Al Quran 3:104).

At another place it is mentioned, "Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord alone knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is rightly guided. (16:125)

In Islam, it is prohibited to use force in converting people, as the Quran says, "Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from

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falsehood. So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest, unfailing handhold. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (2:256)

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathir (d. 1373) writes that this verse means that no one should be forced to become a Muslim, because its teachings and arguments are so clear that there is no need to force anyone to accept Islam. Muhammad Asad, commenting on the verse, writes, "All Islamic jurists, without any exception, hold that forcible conversion is under all circumstances null and void and that any attempt at coercing a non-believer to accept the faith of Islam is a grievous sin: a verdict which disposes of the widespread fallacy that Islam places before the unbelievers the alternative of "conversion or the sword." (The Message of the Quran)

It is reported that Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) once said, "Pass on from me [to the people], even if it is only a verse [of the Quran]. (Mishkat 138)

Throughout the Islamic tradition, the Sufis in particular adopted an apolitical and non-violent approach in the preaching of Islam.

With this spirit, the Sufis played a great role in imparting the message of Islam to different parts of the

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world. By their moral character and spiritual capabilities, they were able to convert a good number of people.

The misconceptions spread by the Orientalists can be countered by referring to Kashmir, where Islam spread by the efforts of the Sufis. Islam flourished here by the efforts of some great Sufis like Sheikh Sharfuddin Turkistani (commonly known as Bulbul Shah) and Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni, who left an indelible impact on the history of this area. Shah-i-Hamadan Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni is regarded as 'Bani Musalmani' in Kashmir, which means 'the founder of Islam'. He is thus regarded as the greatest benefactor of Kashmir, as he infused people with Islamic knowledge and faith. He propagated the monotheistic tenets of the Islamic faith to a people convulsed with un-Islamic practices. Like the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) was accused of imposing Islam by the sword, the same charges were levelled against Shāh-e-Hamadān as well. These charges were popularised by British Orientalists, "administrator-historians" (such as Henry Eliot) in India in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and were borrowed by some biased historians like R C Majumdar and Koenarad Elst. Nowadays these views are widely circulated in order to malign the image of Shāh-e-Hamadān (RA) and his followers. Some people are astonished how thousands of



Hindus and Buddhists abandoned their old faith and accepted Islam in the hands of Shah-i-Hamadān. Hence, efforts have been made to distort the personality of Shāh-e-Hamadān and to erase his strong imprints from the political, social and cultural history of Kashmir. The biases against Shāh-e-Hamadān are very old, and it is surprising that the historians like Kalhana don't even consider Shāh-e-Hamadān 's name to be mentioned in their books. Down the ages, some have passed casual and prejudiced remarks on Shāh-e-Hamadān, like the famous British missionary and educationist, Tyndall Biscoe, who has presented the personality of Shāh-e-Hamadān in a negative shade. In his book 'Kashmir in Sunshine and Shade', Tyndall Biscoe introduces Shāh-e-Hamadān in these words:

"...Mir Syed Ali of Hamadān, who in the fourteenth century had great influence, and to him is ascribed the honour of being one of the chief oppressors of the Hindus." (1)

He further writes,

"It was through his [Shahi Hamadan's] and his son's instigation that the Hindus of Kashmir were ruthlessly persecuted by Qutub-ul-Din and his successor, Sikandar the Idol Breaker."



The writer has not only tried to malign the image of Shāh-e-Hamadān but has also made an effort to put the alleged atrocities exhibited by Sultan Sikandar in the account of Shāh-e-Hamadān.

Referring to 'Khanqah i Moalla' located in Srinagar and attributed to Shah-i-Hamadan, Biscoe writes,

"The mosque stands on the site of a Hindu temple which was demolished by the Muhammadans to make way for their mosque." (Page: 113)

Referring to Muslims as Muhammadans and portraying Islam as a religion of bigotry and violence

has been a general attitude of Christian missionaries, and here it seems that Tyndale Biscoe has resorted to the same mode of thinking here as well.

When we try to have a critical analysis of these accusations, it comes to the forefront that the writer has framed these accusations and charges without any substantial evidence. Without referring to any reliable historical evidence, he has made some irresponsible sweeping statements without going through proper sources of history.

For example, in the 'Author's Note' of his book, he admits that instead of quoting any authentic source of



history, he has blindly relied upon the knowledge of Shankar Pandit, the headmaster of his school. He writes:
(3)

"I must express my thanks to my headmaster, Mr Shanker Pandit, B.A., who allowed me to draw upon his knowledge of the ancient history of Kashmir and of the various rites and ceremonies, both of Hindus and Muhammadans, with respect to birth, death, marriage, etc. What my friend Shanker does not know concerning his country is not worth knowing."

From this statement, one can easily understand how casual the author has been about the history of Kashmir, and probably that is why there are dozens of mistakes in his book. For example, in the book, he describes Mongol as a religion, but we know that it is a race, not a religion. Giving the meaning of the word 'Srinagar', he writes that it means 'The City of Wealth', but all of us know that it means 'The City of the Sun' (4). The casual remarks like these on history may be tolerated, but as far as the saintly figures like Shāh-e-Hamadān (RA) are concerned, the allegations like these are not only provocative, as they show disrespect for him, but also have the potential to kindle the sparks of hatred between Hindus and Muslims, who have been living together with great respect and reverence for Shāh-e-Hamadān. Today,



when the extremists are trying to make people fight in the name of religion, remarks like these can create communal tensions and spread violence in the society. First of all, we should know that genuine and reliable historical records pertaining to the visits of Shāh-e-Hamadān are not available, and the historians have pointed out so many differences and contradictions. Even it is not well established how many times he visited Kashmir, as some say that he visited Kashmir thrice, while some are of the opinion that he came here only once. The Sanskrit historians like Kalhana do not even mention him at all. Thus, the details about him are covered in mystery, and hence, the casual conclusions taken about him do not hold water at all.

In the context of these allegations of Tyndale Biscoe, Ghulam Nabi Khayal writes in the footnote of the translation of the said book:

"A few Christian visitors, historians, researchers and travellers who came to Kashmir from Western countries have openly expressed their prejudices about Kashmiri Muslims from time to time. Otherwise, one cannot even think about the saintly figures like Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni that they would allow atrocities to be incited against the non-Muslims. Actually, during that period, the Hindus were divided into many castes.



Among them, the Shudras, the untouchables, were suffering from all kinds of hardships at the hands of the upper class, i.e., the Brahmins. In these circumstances, Shāh-e-Hamadān introduced Islam to them with better life prospects. Without using oppression and coercion, Shāh-e-Hamadān presented the universal message of Islam, which does not discriminate on the basis of caste, creed and colour, and a good number of Kashmiri Hindus were attracted to Islam, and they accepted the new faith by their own free will. Thus, Biscoe's allegations that Shāh-e-Hamadān was cruel to Hindus are far away from the truth. The so-called oppression of Kashmiri Hindus. Many Hindu historians like Prem Nath Bazaz, PNK Bamzai, etc., have also recorded their disagreement regarding these allegations levelled against Shāh-e-Hamadān, who down the ages have been revered by the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir alike. When Shāh-e-Hamadān visited Kashmir, the local Hindus belonging to lower castes voluntarily accepted Islam on the grounds that they had been constant victims of indescribable oppression and discrimination at the hands of the Brahmins of the time (5).

In fact, Sanskrit chroniclers describe the conversion of Rinchana to Islam in terms of his failure to get entry into a superior fold of Brahmanism; not surprisingly, the conversion of a Brahmin ascetic of the city at the hands



of Sayyid Ali Hamadani was not considered worthy of mention... It should be borne in mind that the Brahminic order had failed to create institutions based on sound religious philosophy which could have served as a bulwark against the forces of Islamic acculturation. (6)

Dr Shamsuddin Ahmad, in his book "Hayat Aur Karnamay", writes:

"Shāh-e-Hamadān was to change the mental and intellectual level of the people of Kashmir. The band of preachers that he came along with had no armours. This is admitted by even the local Brahmin historians that the conversion took place without any use of fear, force and artificial authority. Shāh-e-Hamadān and his comrades were equipped with the weapons of faith and goodwill. They responded to their call of 'Tawheed ' i.e., Oneness of God, and were released from the fetters of superstitions and false beliefs.

Shāh-e-Hamadān addressed the hearts and minds of the people, and he brought about intellectual and spiritual transformation with the simple teachings of Islam, setting high moral standards. With love and compassion , along with his comrades, he visited every town and village with this beautiful message. It was an incredible moral, intellectual and ideological revolution



that was introduced in Kashmir under his guidance. Had there been any use of force and persecution, there would have been a lot of violence in Kashmir, but that was not the case, as recorded by the historians. Shāh-e-Hamadān was so tolerant and magnanimous that despite resorting to their traditional faith (Hinduism), not a single writer or historian of his time levelled any allegations against him. They would rather bow their heads in reverence at his Khanqah. (7)

In the same book, Shams-ud-Din Ahmed further writes:

"This religion, based on the requisites of nature (Islam), became a quintessential part of their being. Thus, they embraced it wholeheartedly, and the recorded history tells us that no one even thought of reverting to the previous faith after the departure of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Rather, the history tells us that later some great personalities arose from the same lot who made unbelievable sacrifices for the propagation of Islam. (8)

As far as another allegation against Biscoe is concerned, i.e., constructing Khanqah at the site of a temple, the famous historian of Kashmir Hasan Khoihami writes,



"By the efforts of Shāh-e-Hamadān, his spiritual greatness and benevolence, the priest of this temple became a Muslim. He repented, razed the temple to the ground, and took an active part in the practice of promoting Islam along with his fellow priests." (9)

From this historical reference, it becomes clear that accusing Shāh-e-Hamadān of building the Khanqah at a temple site is totally baseless. It is recorded that this piece of land was bought from its owners in exchange for a precious gemstone by Mir Muhammad Hamadāni, the son of Shāh-e-Hamadān, in the times of Sultan Sikandar. The Khanqah was constructed by him, as is recorded in the Waqf Nama, a document that is available even today in Persian original text. (10)

Moreover, as per Islamic jurisprudence, it is absolutely prohibited to construct a mosque on illegally occupied land, and it is very unlikely that the saint-like Shāh-e-Hamadān would allow his devotees to take such an un-Islamic step.

According to NK Singh,

"The process of Islamisation in Kashmir started as early as the eighth century and was accelerated after the Shah Mir dynasty was established in 1339.... The Hindus were at that time fed up with the misrule of their kings



and the exploitation by Brahmans. While the king, the courtiers, the royal officers and the Brahmans lived on the fate of the land and in an atmosphere of immorality, the lot of the masses was extremely miserable, and they were engulfed in the depths of despair. Any change that had the prospect of emancipating them from the shackle of outdated social customs and political setups was, therefore, sure to be welcomed. Islam, with its search light on, unity of God, equality between man and man, and a man and woman, and rejection of idolatry, held such hopes for them... It is true that the throne of Kashmir had been under the occupation of Muslim rulers since 1339, but beyond building a few mosques and establishing alms houses, the state had borne no part in the spread of Islam. Every preacher had to paddle his own canoe. There had, therefore, taken place no demolition of the Hindu temples or images... The influx of Sufis and Sayyids in Kashmir went a long way in spreading Islam in the country.” (11)

Contrary to Biscoe, another famous British writer, Walter Lawrence, appears to give a relatively good opinion regarding Shāh-e-Hamadān, and his words reveal the truth of Biscoe's accusations as well; he writes:

“The saint who has exercised the most direct influence on the religion of Kashmir was Mir Saiyad Ali



of Hamadan, who visited the valley in the time of Kutb-ud-Din and practically established Islam in the valley. He is known as Amir-i-Kabir, Shah-i-Hamadan, and Ali Sani, and the Hindus say that he received his inspiration from a Hindu lady, Lalishri, who was an incarnation of a goddess. The Musalmans deny this, but they hold her name in great respect and speak of her as Lal Dedi... His mosque, the Shah-i-Hamadan in Srinagar, is one of the most sacred places in Kashmir and is a worthy memorial of a man who in his time exerted an enormous influence over the country... The Shah-i-Hamadan Mosque was commenced in the reign of Sultan Kutb-ud-Din and was built on the foundations of a Hindu temple, the priest of which had been convinced of his religious errors by the eloquence of Mir Saiyad Ali. (12)

These words of Lawrence suggest that not only Muslims but also Hindus looked at Shāh-e-Hamadān with respect and devotion. Had Shāh-e-Hamadān really incited the persecution of Hindus, how come they would take his name in high esteem and respect?

It also suggests that Shāh-e-Hamadān never resorted to disrespecting and destroying a temple. However, there is a possibility that after mass conversion of Hindus to Islam, the head priest, after accepting Islam, decided to convert the temple into a Khanqah as



no worshippers were left to maintain it. However, some historians have outrightly rejected the incident of converting a temple into a Khanqah, as it lacks the support of any reliable substantial evidence. As a matter of fact, Muslim historians have sometimes exaggerated and glorified the saga of conversions, and out of devotion, they have recorded something that is far from the truth. It is written in *Asrar ul Akhyar* (Tarikh Hasan):

"[Shāh-e-Hamadān] converted the hearts of countless people and brought them into the realm of Islam. The people who used to worship in those temples demolished them and built mosques and Khanqahs." (13)

Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes,

"It was this [khanqahi] spirit of Islam, which was imbibed by the saints who promoted conversions in Kashmir. They not only preached it through their homilies but also practically demonstrated it in the khanqahs established at different places in the valley. They gave strict instructions to the mutawallies (managers) of the khanqahs not to make any discrimination between rich and poor or low-born and high-born... To preach such Islamic teachings, a network of khanqahs was built in different parts of the



valley, particularly amidst the Hindu localities and very close to their places of worship so that the depressed sections among them would be able to compare their own caste-ridden society with the casteless social system of Islam.” (Islam in Kashmir)

It may be the case that when most of the people accepted Islam at some place of their own free will, they themselves considered it appropriate to convert their religious places into mosques and khanqahs, and no force or violence was used in it.

Dr Shamsuddin Ahmed writes:

"In order to show tolerance regarding the local architecture, Shāh-e-Hamadān did not impose a particular style in the construction of religious structures like mosques and khanqahs. This is the reason why the architecture of the ancient Khanqahs is in similitude with the Buddhist temples. Its prominent witnesses are the monasteries that still exist today, whose roofs, including the Jama Masjid, are similar to the roofs of a Buddhist temple. He desired to provide a better way of life to the people and showed tolerance for these minor things but did not give any concessions as far as the matters pertaining to Shariah are concerned. This is the main reason that during the six hundred years of Islamic rule, Kashmiri Pandits have been able to

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maintain their individuality in religious, cultural and social matters. (14)

As far as the baseless charges of inciting the rulers to oppress the Hindu subjects are concerned, this cannot be imagined, as Shāh-e-Hamadān came to Kashmir as a pacific Sufi preacher. His heart was open to the people of all faiths. Having a judicious look at his personality, it becomes clear that he was deeply influenced by the Sufis like Imam Al Ghazali, Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra, and Ibn Arabi, who would never think of hurting the sentiments of other faiths. A careful study of the letters of Shāh-e-Hamadān and Zakhirat-ul-Muluk reveals that his style and tone are not that of a dictator but that of a spiritual counsellor, and he would advise the kings to be just rulers without discriminating on the basis of caste, creed and colour.

Dr Shamsuddin Ahmed writes:

"The non-Muslims, who preferred to stick to their ancient traditions and their own religion, were not harassed. They would keep social interactions with them, giving them religious and cultural freedom.

Throughout the Muslim rule, the Kashmiri Brahmins enjoyed a free life. They had the same privileges as the Muslims. They were not killed for being

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non-Muslims, nor was there ever any conspiracy to destroy their religion and traditions." (15)

It is also worth mentioning that Shāh-e-Hamadān was raised in a spiritual and pacific environment, and his upbringing would never allow him to hate anyone merely on the basis of faith. We do not find a single incident from his life that shows that he treated non-Muslims with hatred.

RK Paramo, in his book 'A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir', writes:

"It must be admitted that Islam entered Kashmir as a saviour. It gradually restored the social and moral strength of the people. They were revived by a new social order and a religion which is simple, comprehensible and practical. Islam dispels the external anarchic and divisive forces. It stabilises and unites the social forces. The philosophy of Islam first awakened the minds of a few people who later became its torchbearers."

Dr Mohammad Ishaq Khan writes,

"Sayyid Ali's letters addressed to the Sultan of Kashmir, Qutbuddin (1773-89), are also revealing. They reflect his tolerant attitude towards the non-Muslims of Kashmir. Had the Sayyid not approved of the "Friendly" attitude of the Sultan towards non-Muslims: he would



have expressed his displeasure, disappointment or disgust in his letters written from Pakhli on the eve of his departure from the Kashmir Valley. On the contrary, the Sayyid seems to have been deeply aware of the implications of his historical mission in Kashmir, and this explains why he enjoined the Sultan to make efforts to popularise the Shari'a but (only) within possible limits. Notwithstanding the Sayyid's Shariya-mindedness, neither his letters nor *Dhakhirat ul Muluk* give even the faintest hint that he wanted the Sultan to be unfriendly towards the great majority of his non-Muslim subjects. For him, all subjects of the Sultan were the children of God; hence, it was a religious obligation for the Sultan to protect the rights of the weak against the strong." (16)

Shāh-e-Hamadān writes in his book *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*:

"The ruler's justice should be the same for all his subjects, and in this matter the ruler should not allow any distinction between those who are eligible or those who are not eligible for favour because the king is the shadow of God, and God's mercy encompasses all the people, irrespective of their faith. Like God, a ruler should do good to all." (17)

Dr Mohammad Ishaq Khan further writes,

"Although Zakhirat-ul-Muluk is not a source of the history of Kashmir, it is necessary to remove certain misunderstandings about its author's role in Kashmir in view of the above treatment of a passage from it as evidence of his supposed "conflict" with the Sultan for not enforcing the Shari'a in his kingdom. In the first place, there is no concrete evidence in the sources to show that the Sayyid ever stood for imposing "discriminatory conditions" on the Kashmiri Sultan's non-Muslim subjects, who were undoubtedly in an overwhelming majority on the eve of his advent in the Valley. Added to this is the fact that the Sayyid, notwithstanding his adherence to the Shafi school, showed broad-mindedness in allowing a band of local converts and Muslim settlers in Kashmir to follow the Hanafi law. Sayyid Ali's decision seems to have been guided by expediency since the Hanafi law, as compared to the other three schools of Islamic jurisprudence, is less rigid in regard to the treatment to be meted out to non-Muslims by a Muslim ruler.

Likewise, while showing regard for the local religious ethos in allowing neo-Muslims to read Aurad-i Fathiyya aloud in chorus, the Sayyid demonstrated a keen sense of practical wisdom and judgement in laying

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a firm foundation for the gradual assimilation of the folk in Islam." (18)

Sultan Shahabuddin was intellectually and spiritually trained by Syed Ali Hamadāni. According to Jonaraja, the earliest and the most reliable authority, when Kashmir suffered an economic crisis under Sultan Shahabuddin, the Hindu minister Udaya Sri suggested melting the brass image of Buddha and coining the metal into money. The Sultan replied in anger, "Past generations have set up images to obtain fame and earn merit, and you propose to demolish them. Some have obtained renown by setting up images of gods, others by worshipping them, some by duly maintaining them, and some by demolishing them. How great is the enormity of such a deed!" (19)

Prof. H. N. Rafiabadi, in his introduction to "Kashmir Under Sultans", writes,

According to Mohibbul Hasan, it was the group of Sufis, "the priest missionaries from India and Central Asia, "who converted the Hindus to Islam, whether from the Buddhist or Hindu masses. These "saint missionaries" came in the wake of traders and adventurers, and "it is they who were responsible for introducing Islam to the valley." The author, after stating that the Sultan Sikandar was the "only" ruler "who took



keen interest in the work of proselytisation”, However, “his work was undone by Zainul Abidin... The success of Islam in the valley was mainly due to the efforts of the Sufis. Islam, as introduced by the great Sufi saints, was a simple monotheistic creed, free from ceremonials, caste, and priesthood. It thus appealed to the people and won converts easily.” (20)

It clearly shows that the allegations of coercion against Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni and other Sufi saints and rulers are baseless.

A look at the authentic books of history shows that Shāh-e-Hamadān entered Kashmir without any political ambitions. He came here along with his God-conscious comrades without any political and military power. However, his spiritual aura was so powerful that it attracted a huge number of people. They would listen carefully to every word he spoke and follow in his footsteps. Moreover, the people were stuck in the pits of poverty and the caste system, and they responded positively to his message of liberty and prosperity. He provided an economic package to the people by introducing the shawl industry, carpet industry, paper-mâché, calligraphy, stonework, copperwork, silverwork, embroidery, bookbinding, etc. He thought of the wellbeing of the people on both the two levels, i.e.,



material and spiritual. By promoting godliness and philanthropy, he transformed the destiny of Kashmir. He economically empowered the people of Kashmir and enabled them to stick to their faith forever.

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Shāh-e-Hamadān and the Menace of Sectarianism

Professor Hameeda Bano*

In today's Kashmir, Shah-i-Hamadān is relevant from various perspectives, chief among them the growing menace of manufactured religious sectarianism, economic deprivation and mismanagement, absence of skilled native manpower, misrule and misgovernance, observance of rituals rather than the spirit of religion and so on and so forth. I would rather exclusively focus on his take on sectarianism, which is posing a grave threat to our unity, and forces over which we have no control are fuelling communal harmony at present.

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Sectarianism follows from the perception that one's ideological group alone has access to the whole truth and the key to divine mysteries. Sufis are well-known for rejecting sectarianism and even tolerating other faiths. Shah-i-Hamadan was primarily a Sufi, and he challenges sectarianism. A look at *Chihl Asrar* reveals his intoxication for the one Absolute, obliterating all divisions.

However, this does not mean he was not a missionary of Islam. Being a missionary is not incompatible with being averse to sectarianism. Sufis, in fact, have been the key agents in spreading Islam, as Thomas Arnold has described in 'The Preaching of Islam'. But nevertheless, they have been cordial to non-Muslims or other sects and do not talk of other maslaks. Closer to home, we see Sheikh-ul Aalam Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani asking Muslims to shun Hindu mores but at the same time pleading for communal harmony. Saints are against making religion an ideology and imposing it on people blindly. They are only for moral revolution, and their very presence exudes heavenly joy, peace, and lofty moral values. Saints come for 'wasl' and not 'fasal'. Name any Sufi with whom his neighbours, his brothers in faith or non-believers were not happy.



In today's Kashmir we find religion packaged into rival ideological schools, all claiming supremacy and exclusive access to truth. In Mir Sayed Ali Hamadani , we find only the song of the One – so beautifully portrayed in 'Awrad-i-Fathiyya' – and a plea for seeking moral perfection. See 'Dhakhirat-al-Muluk', and you will find its first chapters devoted to the moral qualities of a ruler. He is not only discussing correct belief but correct practice as well. In fact, Islam is primarily a faith and not a belief system. It emphasises Aml-i-Saleh for salvation and not resorting to a particular ritual system. So Hamadāni asks us to compete in perfecting ethics and not proving niceties of belief systems or one's interpretation of 'Tawheed'.

Hamadāni is a poet, an intoxicated Sufi above all. We need to foreground this poetic and mystical aspect rather than the legalist in him. Making a fetish of legalism has ruined us. Till this date, it is debatable which legal school he belonged to. He did not emphasise the legal point of view, but the point is, he is above all, a man of God who, in Rumi 's words, is beyond belief and heresy. What Shah-i-Hamadan, therefore, has to say is something that dislodges our complacency. He blasts us with the dynamite of love so that nothing remains of the ego that could assert the 'I' and cry 'holier than thou'. As Chihl Asrar puts it, our journey here is most fundamentally



about existential and socio-political issues that come only afterwards. This journey is travelled alone and best travelled by those who dive deeper into themselves with the help of a spiritual master. But how many of us have taken up this journey and thus have seriously worked for purification of self or transcendence of ego? I will refer to Hamadāni's spiritual mentor Ibn Arabi and explain his position to state Hamadāni's position. Ibn Arabi and other traditional authorities in mysticism have made a case for plurality of approaches to God. As God is the only reality, the existence that is one manifest in countless forms, we cannot afford to escape Him. He has commanded that he alone should be worshipped; Ibn Arabi builds on this verse to argue that only God is worshipped by all who worship. Idols are merely names. Religions are responses to a transcendent reality that refuses to be named or articulated in language or thought. Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani, echoing Sufis and mystics of other traditions, has put this point in his own way:

"There is one God but with a hundred names. There is not a single blade of grass which does not worship Him."

The fact of his being a devout Muslim did not prevent him from being open to inspiration from people of other faiths, as is evident from the story of the peasant



girl called Bhawani, who earned her livelihood carrying water to a village and spending all her earnings on feeding her birds while she would starve herself. In her memory, Nund Rishi prayed to God:

*"That little girl in a small village
Who quenched the thirst of the thirsty?
Flew in the high heavens with her pet birds.
Bestow on me, my Lord, the same grace."*

Ibn Arabi gives the most universal definition of Muhamadan, where this becomes not a designation of a particular historical community but the very name of universality and perfection. It is the name of a station theoretically available to everyone, attainable to the select few. Who travel on and on, perfectly realising all stations until they arrive at the station of no station, in which one has nothing of one's own and therefore mirrors the Real most perfectly and is not defined by any particular divine name or attribute but brings together all standpoints or stations. (Twinch 2004)

Mohamadan saints give each created thing what is due to it on the basis of seeing it as a unique self-disclosure (Tajali) of the absolute Haq (Truth). Real and the manyness of creation that allows them "to give each thing that has a Haq its Haq as demanded by the Prophet (Chittick 1998). For him, a Mohamadan is one who



realises the perfection of all the prophets – an ideal worth emulating for every man – and who can assert that he is truly a Mohamadan and who can be more inclusivist than a Mohamadan in this sense? He demands, as Qunawi puts it, that one should perceive each thing only through that thing itself and inasmuch as one is identical with each thing, and thus one is the attribute of every attribute and the quality of every essence, and one's act is the act of every actor. (Nafahat 265). The highest station of no-station demands disengaging oneself from all qualities, bonds, limitations and constrictions and standing non-delimited Wujud, i.e., to be absolutely open to the Real with no imposition or will of one's own. It is what Jesus calls the poverty of spirit, and other scriptures, such as the Bhagavad Gita, call it detachment. His vision of the unity of Being demands, in short, transcendence or cessation of all inequalities and distinctions of caste, creed, colour, class, race, gender, nationality, regionality, etc. He demands the sacrifice of which thinks in terms of its rights over and against the rights of others. "I" must be annihilated in fanna so that one mirrors existence or God and flows with the wholeness or Tao. Ibn Arabi thus demands nothing less than universal compassion and encountering the other with infinite humility and care – an ideal which Levinas attempts to appropriate.



The following passage is a particularly detailed and important expression of this understanding, which is at the very foundation of all his writing. In this passage is summed up essential Ibn Arabi and the central message of all integral traditions as masters of traditions formulate it . Here is the basis for ethics on which all traditions are united, i.e., transcendence of lower self to subsist in the divine self. This is his formulation of the theory and objective of mystical discipline. Here is also a manifesto for co-existence of traditions or plurality of modes of experiencing or relating to the divine:

"Now you must know that if a human being (al insan) renounces their personal aims, takes a loathing to their animal self (nafs) and instead prefers their Sustainer/teacher (rabb), then the real will give (that human being) a form of divine guidance in exchange for the form of their carnal self... so that they walk in garments of Light. And (this form) is the Shariah of their Prophet, while some see it in the form of their (spiritual) state."

Ibn Arabi says in 'The Kernel of the Kernel', "You will be all if you make nothing of yourself". This is the golden rule that allows one to know all truths and achieve all perfections and absolute certainty. Modern man, especially the academician, the philosopher of religion, or the phenomenologist, is more interested in



speculation about truth or God or neutral "objective" idle inquiry than being inclined to sell everything, including the dearest self, as Jesus would say, or make nothing of himself for the sake of truth. That explains why there is so much knowledge and so little wisdom today and why he is farther from God and nearer to dust. It is only by becoming nothing, by absolute detachment, that one can attain the central point, the still centre of existence where lasting peace and felicity lie. The friend does not tolerate the duality, as Ibn Arabi reminds us, and comes to live in the sanctuary of a perfectly polished mirror of the heart.

Ibn Arabi is a great ethical philosopher. I quote some of his maxims which speak volumes about the subtlety and profundity of his ethical thought which aligns him with the great tradition of ethics represented in both Semitic and non-Semitic traditions. The following are from *'The Mantle of Initiation'*, and the last two are from his *'Book of Spiritual Advice'*.

1. Do not condemn any of those addicted to carnal appetites, do not urge leadership upon anyone, and do not hold down your children to serve your own interests. Take no joy in a reputation flattering to yourself spreading among the general public, even if you deserve it.



2. Care nothing for the ignorance of him who does not know your worth; rather, it is not seemly that there be any sense of your worth even in your eyes.

3. Have no desire that people should listen to your speech.

4. Be not anxious to give an answer to anything displeasing said about you.

5. Be content with God's decree, not necessarily with everything decreed but with the decree itself, and receive with joy whatever may come from Him.

6. Pardon the one who has harmed you, i.e., do not even defend yourself.

7. In general, you should hold a good opinion of everyone, and your heart should be at peace with them.

Mysticism is nothing but self-discovery, and there is no mystery mongering in this arduous journey that demands strict discipline and going within. Neither ritual nor mindless repetitions of certain formulae or mental gymnastics can do the trick for the seeker. God is not sold in the marketplaces, in mosques or shrines or in music parties.

Remembrance of God is the royal road to mystical heaven, or beatitude, as Sheikh Nooruddin says:

"Zikr-i-haq par zev dith talus
Dev raz haunz yi zaalas kun."

*Remember God by joining tongue and palate.
Perhaps the King would unveil Himself to you.*

Finding God needs perfection of ethical discipline,
and that is what is lacking in most of the would-be
travellers on the path.

"Juuri rousti jahazi torum
Morum chek, rish to moh.

*Without a sailor, I drew my boat to shore and
conquered jealousy and pride.*

For finding God, nothing is needed except attending
to the basics, purifying the heart, watching breath and
keeping a watchful eye over the desiring self. The Sheikh
denies in his reply to Bum Saad that he had any formal
'guru' or 'peer' and that he read only kalima and took
care of five prayers. He realised the meaning of the
fundamental doctrine of faith after sacrificing the self
for the Existence, the non-self.

"La-ilaha illa-Allah sahi korum.
Wahee korum panun paan
Wajud travith mojud sorum
Harmukh wuchum panun paan"



*I practised the shahadah.
Burnt the self
Abandoned the self to realise the Real
And everywhere I saw myself*

Thus, mystics like Hamadāni would pose the following questions to sectarianists:

Have you tasted God/paradise? Or are you talking from hearsay?

Faith and heresy are not to be theologically understood.

One must see and desire only one. Judge not.



The Religious Creed of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

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Translation: Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Shāh-e-Hamadān has an illustrious and envious record as far as his services to Islam are concerned. The Sufi saint regarded as 'the architect of the destiny of the Ummah ' dedicated his entire life to the promotion and propagation of Islam. While travelling to at least one third of the known [Muslim] world, he conveyed the universal message of Islam in such a beautiful way that thousands of people accepted Islam at his hands. High thinking, open-mindedness and tolerance can be

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regarded as the main speciality of his efforts of preaching. Undoubtedly, he was associated with a particular creed in aqeeda (faith) and fiqh (jurisprudence), but these associations were free of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. He didn't travel the world as a preacher of a particular sect, but he set out as a representative of a religion which is universal in its outlook. This is the reason that Shāh-e-Hamadān is equally popular in all the sects and strands of Islam.

Ideological Creed

The religious thought of Shāh-e-Hamadān was so expansive and inclusive that almost everyone considers him as the upholder of his creed. The Shiites categorically consider him to be a 'Shia' in aqeeda and regard him as the nineteenth great pole (Qutb) of the mystical golden chain (Silsila dhahbiya). (1) Many Shia scholars like Syed Nurullah Shustari have counted him among Shia scholars. He has taken some of his verses that speak of his deep love for the Ahl-ul-Bayit (the blessed family of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ).

اگر حب علی و آل بتولت نہ بود
امید شفاعت از رسولت نہ بود
گر طاعت حق جملہ بجا آری تو
بی مہر علی پہنچ قبولت نہ بود (2)



“If you do not love Ali and the progeny of Fatima Batool

You have no hope of the intercession of Prophet Muhammad on the judgement day.

If you worship God to the best of your capability

But having no love of Ali will raze all your efforts."

Taking Shāh-e-Hamadān as a holy saint of the Shia Imamiya sect, Mirza Abdullah Effendi al-Asbhani writes,"

He [Shāh-e-Hamadān] is among the masters of knowledge and the men of virtue, one of our Sufis and Imams. In creed, he belongs to the Shia Imamiya group. (3) The Shiites have tried to support their position with the writings and teachings of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Taking support from the books like 'Risala Al-Muwaddat fi al-Qurba', 'Risala Rawdhat-ul-Firdous' and 'Risala Arbaeen Amiriyya' about the virtues of the Ahl-ul-Bayit and from some other proofs, they have concluded that Shāh-e-Hamadān belongs to the scholars of the Shia school of thought.

On the contrary, the Sunni authoritative researchers and scholars have taken him as one of the greatest Sufi saints of Sunni Islam. They consider him to be a

confluence of the outward and esoteric aspects of the religion.

Maulana Jami says about him,

"He was a master of the outward and esoteric aspects of the religion. His works are famous in the circles of those having interest in esoteric sciences." (4) Furthermore, Shah Waliullah of Delhi, who is an undisputed expert in the matters pertaining to the outward and esoteric aspects of Islam, takes him as "the perfect researcher' and writes about his book *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* that the one who recites this book regularly will witness its divine blessings and will get a share from the blessings of the fourteen hundred saints. (5) However, taking all the books of *Shāh-e-Hamadān* into consideration, there remains no doubt that he belongs to the Sunni strand of Islam.

As in '*Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*', he says, It is obligatory on every believer to teach his people the beliefs of the '*Ahlu Sunnah*' in matters of religion. (6) Declaring the teaching and beliefs of '*Ahlu Sunnah*' as obligatory does not mean that he lacks something in the love of Ali and '*Ahl al-Bayt*'. Like an unfathomable ocean, his heart is filled with the love of '*Ahl-ul-Bayit*'.

According to Syeda Ashraf Zafar, his heart is full of love for the family of Muhammad (ﷺ), and the '*Wilayah*'

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of Ali is deeply rooted in his very existence. (7)

He finds salvation in keeping himself busy in praising the Ahl-ul-Bayit. In the foreword of "Al Muwadat-ul-Qurba " he writes, May Allah make this (collection of Ahadith in the praise of Ahl-ul-Bayit) the means of nearness to Him, and may we achieve salvation due to their blessings." (8)

According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, the knowledge of the virtues of the Ahl-ul-Bayit is necessary for every believer. He writes, "In order to attain acceptance from God, it is obligatory to have the love of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the love of the progeny of Fatima, and it is unattainable without knowing the virtues of the Prophet and his Ahl-ul-Bayit." (9)

Writing commentary on a verse of 'Qasidah Mimiya' by Ibn al-Fariz, Shāh-e-Hamadān expresses his great devotion to Hazrat Ali. He writes, Probably here the poet refers to the external phenomena or the realities of the self. Here 'badr' refers to the soul, which is the manifestation of the unity; 'kasa' refers to the reality of love, and 'hilal' refers to Hazrat Ali, who is the cupbearer of the drink of the love of Allah. He is the one who quenches the thirst of the lovers by guiding them to the springs of 'wasl'. As the Prophet ﷺ has said, "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate." (10)

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Shāh-e-Hamadān has a deep love for the Ahl-ul-Bayit, and the reason behind his outstanding love of Ali is that he knows his greatness. He says, "I fully understand the greatness of Ali." Another reason for his adoration of Ali is that most of the Sufi orders spring from him, and the Fatwatiya Sufi order in particular considers Ali as the absolute leader. Furthermore, as per the Holy Quran, the love of Ahl-ul-Bayit is a prerequisite for the love of Allah and His messenger. It is the identity of the faith of a Muslim.

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْبُودَةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ۖ

Say, [O Prophet], "I do not ask you for any reward for this (message), except affection for (my) close relatives."

So, if it is taken as being Shia to show immense love for Ahl-ul-Bayit, then, like Imam Shafi Shāh-e-Hamadān, I will be proud of being a Shia.

لو كان رضا حب آل محمد سائلاً إليهم
فليس شهد الشغلان اني رافض

i.e., if having immense love for the close relatives of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is taken as 'Rafdh', then let all the people know that I'm a 'Rafidhi'.

However, despite being absorbed in the love of the

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Ahl-ul-Bayit, he never forgets the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and always pays respect to them.

Shāh-e-Hamadān writes in *Risala Dhikriyya*,

"And salutations of Allah may be upon the Ahl-ul-Bayit, who are the sun of the world of reality, and upon the 'Ashab', that is, the companions of the Prophet, who are the stars on the path of tariqah. Boundless blessings be upon the Ahl-ul-Bayit, who are the custodians of wilayah, and upon the companions, who are the stars of guidance. (13)

Among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Shāh-e-Hamadān has special regard for the Khulafa e Rashidein, i.e., the divinely guided four Caliphs of Islam. He considers them the best among all the people and accepts their status as caliphs. In *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, he writes,

"After the Prophet ﷺ, the companions are the best people, and the best among them are the divinely guided Caliphs, i.e., Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Uthman and Hazrat Ali; may Allah be pleased with all of them." (14)

On the one hand, he takes the name of Hazrat Ali with great reverence, and on the other, he also shows great respect for the first three caliphs of Islam. In his

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sermon [Khutbah], he takes their names with respect, he says,

"O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad ﷺ and upon the rightly guided caliphs after him, especially upon the first caliph, Imam Abu Bakr Siddique. May Allah's blessings be upon Umar bin Khattab, who was the just ruler and spoke the right words, and blessings be on Uthman bin Affan, the martyr, a traveller of the straight path with two lights, and Allah's blessings be on the foundation of kindness and sincerity, i.e., Ali bin Abi Talib, the one who speaks strongly, the shining moon in the sky of knowledge, the centre and axis of the circle of the people of faith, and the one who holds countless positions and merits." (15)

From the above-mentioned proofs, it becomes clear that the heart of Shāh-e-Hamadān was full of devotion and love for both the Ahl al-Bayt and the Sahaba; he would never discriminate between the two. His spiritual creed would not afford the prejudices. Commenting on the broad-mindedness of Shāh-e-Hamadān, Dr Syeda Ashraf Zafar writes, In my opinion, Syed Ali Hamadāni was a spiritually enlightened person who was above the religious prejudices and sectarian outlooks. There was an immense love and devotion in his heart for the pious people of Islam, especially for Ahl-ul-Bayt; he

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advocated for showing great respect for them. The only difference is that he would consider the Ahl-ul-Bayit as the brilliant sun and took the 'Suhaba' (the companions of the Prophet ﷺ) as stars of guidance for the people of tareeqah." (16)

The writer then consolidates her viewpoint by referring to Risala Dhikriyya of Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān. (17)

Jurisprudential Creed

Like Shāh-e-Hamadān was broad-visioned in ideological matters, in the same way, he would exhibit a tolerant and flexible attitude in the matters pertaining to jurisprudence as well. Professor Muhibul Hasan writes in his book:

"One of his disciples, Jafar Badakhshi, says that he [Shāh-e-Hamadān] was Hanafi in jurisprudential creed but later became a Shafi'i. However, he had no objection to any of his followers being Hanafi, nor did he oppose the Hanafi law in Kashmir." (18)

The author of 'Salar I Ajam', taking reference from 'Risala Masturat', argues that Shāh-e-Hamadān was on the Hanafi law. (19) But this view cannot be accepted because Shāh-e-Hamadān has himself written the various religious matters as per the Shafi'i school of



thought in his books. For example, he writes,

"1. There are six 'faraidh', i.e., obligatory rituals in 'Wudhu', i.e., ablution.

The first is to make an intention, the second is to wash the face, the third is to wash both hands up to the wrist, the fourth is to wipe some of the head, the fifth is to wash the feet, and the sixth is to maintain order in performing these rituals. 2. There are two 'faraidh', i.e., obligatory rituals in 'ghusl', i.e., bathing. The first is to make an intention; the second is to wash the entire body. 3. There are five 'faraidh', i.e., obligatory rituals in 'Tayammum'. The first is taking pure dust, the second is to make an intention of purity, the third is wiping the face, the fourth is wiping the hands up to the elbows, and the fifth is to maintain order in performing these rituals. 4. It is Sunnah to say 'Aameen' loudly in the 'salah', i.e., in prayer.

5. During a permissible travel, there is the provision of 'qasr', i.e., shortening the obligatory prayers. 6. The Eid prayers are a sunnah." (20)

In these matters, in place of Hanafi fiqh, Shāh-e-Hamadān has followed the Shafi'i school of thought (21).

Nevertheless, when he visited Kashmir, he observed

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that the preachers who had introduced Islam to this part of the world were the followers of Hanafi fiqh, and they taught the same to the new converts. Showing a broad vision, Shāh-e-Hamadān kept Shafi'i fiqh limited to himself and to his Shafi'i comrades. Had he wished, he could have implemented the Shafi'i fiqh in Kashmir, as both the ruler and the subjects were his devotees. But he considered it appropriate to keep the people away from the jurisprudential differences. His disciples and followers also maintained this approach; that is the reason why the majority of people in Kashmir today follow the Hanafi school of thought in matters of fiqh. Shāh-e-Hamadān disapproved of the practice of not praying behind an Imam who is not from your jurisprudential creed (maslak). He considered it permissible to pray behind any Muslim imam, even if the imam is a transgressor. In *Risala Tawheed*, he writes,

"It is permissible to pray behind everyone. It's no problem if the imam is a righteous or a wicked person." (22) However, he strongly condemns looking for concessions in controversial issues. He considers it contrary to piety. He writes in *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, So, the person who seeks concessions according to his desire in the rulings of Shari'ah and wants to take advantage of the jurisprudential differences and abandons the more correct opinion or the position

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based on caution and piety, he is deprived of the blessing of showing obedience to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). (23)

Mystical Creed

Like Shāh-e-Hamadān shows broad-mindedness and reconciliation in the matters pertaining to theological ideas and jurisprudential differences, in spirituality, he emerges as 'Jami-ul-Salasil', i.e., the collector of Sufi orders, and 'Sufwat-ul-Asfiya', i.e., the combination of the attributes of the pious. The main reason behind this broad-mindedness and tolerance is that he was widely travelled and he had met numerous saints from different Sufi orders and benefitted from all of them.

In 61 years of piety, he travelled the Muslim world thrice and obtained blessings from fourteen hundred holy saints, and they had a great influence on his outlook. He spiritually benefitted from the greats like Imam Raza, Sheikh Najmuddin Kubra, the origin of Sufism and Futuwat Hazrat Ali, and the leader of mankind in all good virtues, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

(24) Nooruddin Jafar Badakhshi writes in his commentary on a verse of Shāh-e-Hamadān: "It seems that Shāh-e-Hamadān is on the spiritual position of



'Itlaq', and on this position, a Sufi undergoes divine transformation and is characterised by the attributes of God. (25) Actually, Shāh-e-Hamadān had reached such an exalted and lofty spiritual station where a Sufi, after transcending the limited spheres of prejudices and positions, becomes a manifestation of God's beautiful attributes, and he is overpowered with what the Quran calls 'Sibghat Allah' (26), i.e., the colour of Allah, and the divine light of Unity [of God] manifests on the human heart.

رنگ عارف رنگ معروف است و بس
رنگ معروف نه پیش است نه بس 27

On reaching this spiritual station (maqam), for the sake of our benefit, Shāh-e-Hamadān expresses the blessings that were bestowed upon him in these words:

"Hamadāni has found the treasure that is beyond the reach of human intellect." (28) The attainment of these spiritually exalted positions broadened his mind to diverse aspects of the divine reality, and it provided him a universal scope. Although he was associated with the Kubravi Sufi order, he was not confined to its limitations. As per his personal observations and spiritual explorations, he used to describe the mystical facts as he saw them. His spiritual positions kept on changing, and

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they were expressed in one way or the other.

It is generally thought that Shāh-e-Hamadān followed 'Wahdat-ul-Shuhood', and this argument is supported by his booklet, "Wujadiyyah", but in the foreword of "Hall-ul-Fusoos " he shows inclination towards 'Wahdat-ul-Wujood'. (29)

According to GMD Sufi, Shāh-e-Hamadān belongs to the Suhrwardiya Sufi order (30), whereas the author of "Nigaristan i Faras " considers him an Imam in the Qadiriya order (31). As mentioned earlier, the Shiites consider him a 'Qutb' of the Dhahbiya order. (31)

But the shades of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order are also found in his teachings. In the discussions on 'dhikr i jehri' and 'dhikr I khafi', he seems to be among the great saints of the Naqshbandiyya order. Dr Sabir Afaqi calls him 'the imam of the Naqshbandi order'. According to him, he was a contemporary of Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband and Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of the founder of the Naqshbandi order and later on himself emerged as its prominent master.

In 'Risala al-Awarad', he talks about the merits of doing 'dhikr' in a moderate and beautiful voice. Here, he seems to be in consonance with the saints of the Chishtiya Sufi order.



In short, we can say that Shāh-e-Hamadān took all the Sufi orders, with different situations and intentions, as means of establishing a close association with God. It is by taking blessings from one thousand and four hundred Sufi saints that Shāh-e-Hamadān compiled his book 'Awrad-i-Fathiyya', and these saints were from different Sufi orders. Describing its numerous virtues and benefits, Shāh-e-Hamadān gave general permission to all the people, irrespective of schools of thought, to recite 'Awrad-i-Fathiyya' for spiritual upliftment, and it clearly speaks of his broad-mindedness. (34)

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Shāh-e-Hamadān: A Key Revivalist of Economy in Kashmir during Medieval Times

Juneefa Bilal*

Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadāni (1314-1385), popularly known as *Amir-i-Kabir*, was a profound Muslim thinker, reformer, polymath and writer whose teachings and ideology revolutionised all aspects of Kashmiri society and culture. His life was filled with enthusiasm and energy. He was an '*Aalim* and highly revered Sufi who sacrificed his whole life for the cause of Islam. He travelled quite extensively during his lifetime. The most important sojourn was his visit to the valley of Kashmir. When he entered the valley, people were ethically very

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low, society was caste-ridden, the economy was totally shattered, civil wars were in vogue, lawlessness was at its peak and treatment meted out to women was inhumane. (1) Many Hindu practices were prevalent in the society, especially among the ruling class, like Sultan Qutb ud din, who used to wear Hindu dress, visit Hindu temples and had two wives who were real sisters (2), who then, on the advice of *Amir-i-Kabir*, divorced one of them (3). Hindu practices like Sati (4) and Devadasi (5) were espoused by all the society. The prevailing atmosphere of the society was really in need of a reformer. Thus, at this juncture, Shah-i-Hamadan entered the valley in the 14th century and influenced all sections of Kashmiri society, primarily due to the integrity of his personality and ideology. It was because of his charismatic and magnanimous personality that more than 37000 people embraced Islam within a short span of time (6). Bamzai, while deliberating upon the mass conversion of Kashmiri people, says that "*Sayyid Ali Hamadāni's deep scholarship and spiritual attainments were responsible for accelerating the process of conversion of the valley to Islam* (7). His religious zeal has played a marvellous role in framing and changing the behaviour of Kashmiri people. His arrival in the valley by all standards acts as a watershed in the history of Kashmir. It heralded the dawn of the new era in the sense that the history of



Kashmir took decisively a new direction. He rescued Sufism in the valley from worldliness and pantheist beliefs, and his literary contribution proves to be one of the most ubiquitous reading materials in Kashmir. In addition to his contribution towards the Islamisation of Kashmir, he was the person who paved the way for the Kashmiri economy to reach its glory and laid the foundation of arts and crafts in the valley based on the Central Asian pattern. His introduction of arts and craftsmanship in the valley resulted not only in material advancement but also enhanced the means of halal income, as he used to stress *Akl-i-halal* in his preachings. Allama Iqbal pays tribute to Amir-i-Kabir and regards him as a chieftain of *Saadat* and builder of the destiny of the Muslim Ummah (8). Undoubtedly, many books, theses, research papers and articles have been written on Shah-i-Hamadan, but mostly they deal with his life, writings, spiritual feats (*Karamat*), mystical thought and political role. However, it seems that there is a need for a summarised paper that could illuminate his role in the emancipation of the Kashmiri economy. Thus, in a similar vein, this essay anticipates the role of Shah-i-Hamadan as a key revivalist of Kashmir's economy during mediaeval times. Moreover, this essay will assess the different types of crafts and arts brought in the valley by Shah-i-Hamadan. This essay is primarily qualitative

in nature, and the methodology adopted for this paper is historical-cum-descriptive.

Impact of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani on the Economy of Kashmir:

Shah-i-Hamadan was a multi-dimensional personality. Besides being a religious thinker, he was a social reformer. He was accompanied by seven hundred saints (*saadat*) who were not only religious preachers and missionaries but also craftsmen, artisans, painters, calligraphers and shawl makers (9). They not only brought Islam into the valley but also paved the way for economic prosperity. *Amir-i-Kabir*, by his clandestine efforts, revived and boosted the arts and crafts in Kashmir, e.g., the shawl industry, paper mache (*Kar-i-Qalamdani*), calligraphy (*khatati*), stonework, copper work, silver work, woodwork, embroidery, the carpet industry (*Qaleen Baafi*), wickerwork, *hammams*, etc. According to Prof. Naseem Rafiabadi, “*Muhammad Yousuf Teng, Prof. Muhibul-Hasan, Hakim Ghulam Hussein Makhmoor and other important researchers unanimously regard Shah-i-Hamadan and his mission as the great event advent of the emergence of arts and crafts in Kashmir* (10). The United Nations agency UNESCO reported in 2014 that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadāni was one of the principal historical figures who shaped the culture



of Kashmir, both architecturally and through the flourishing of arts and crafts, and hence the economy in Kashmir. The skills and knowledge that he brought to Kashmir gave rise to an entire industry (11). Shah-i-Hamadan accentuated earning a livelihood by one's own hands and rejected both support from the state and charity from the people given to 'Ulama, for he believed that this would encourage lethargy in 'Ulama and ultimately they would become parasites. He himself made his living by cap making and encouraged his *Murids* (followers) to do the same (12). Besides, he possessed expertise in needleworking (Sozan kari) (13). As he was quite aware of the benefits of trade and commerce, he thus introduced various types of arts and crafts in the valley which are enumerated below:

I. Shawl Industry

In his famous book, “*The Kashmiri Shawl and its Indo-French Influence*”, Frank Ames investigates the origin and development of the Kashmiri shawl and how it migrated to Europe. According to him, the English word “shawl” is derived from the Persian “*shāl*”, and in Eastern culture, “*shāl*” describes not only the one particular article of clothing but a whole range of fine woollen fabrics (14). A shawl can be defined as a piece of cloth worn by women, commonly over the head or

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shoulders or wrapped around a body to keep it warm. It is usually made from sheep wool.

Undoubtedly it was none other than Shah-i-Hamadan who made Sultan Qutb al-Din start the shawl industry in Kashmir on the pattern of Central Asian *Karkhana* (factory) (15). In his famous work, “*Islamic Culture in Kashmir*”, G.M.D. Sufi, while deliberating on the origin and development of the shawl industry, put forth that:

“The shawl industry of Kashmir may be as old as the hills; it is stated to have flourished in the days of Kuravas and Pandavas. It was in a prosperous condition during the times of the Roman Empire, when Kashmiri shawls were worn by the proudest beauties at the Court of Caesars. In Ashoka's time we find the shawl mentioned in the Buddhist works as the Kashmiri shawl. But in the course of time, it had its death. It was, however, through the efforts of the Great Saint, Shah-i-Hamadan, that the shawl as we know it now was reborn in Kashmir in the later part of the fourteenth century, and the shawl industry took a new lease of life. Sultan Qutub ud Din, who was then the ruler of Kashmir, patronised, nourished and stimulated it.” (16)

Mohibbul Hassan posits that the shawl industry did not exist in Kashmir before the thirteenth century, as there is not a single reference to it either in Kalhana's



Rajtarangni or in any other source, and states that it was established by Shah-i-Hamadan in 1378 and was developed under the patronage of the Sultans with the help of weavers who came from Persia and Turkistan. Mir Syed Mushtaq Hamadani says, “*When Amir-i-Kabir came to Kashmir from Ladakh, he brought with him Pashm, and after arriving here, he got the processing of Pashm affected and started various varieties of Pashmina work conducted. He prepared a pair of socks by his own hands and gifted that to Sultan Qutub ud Din (17). N. Saraf Says: “It Is Said That Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, who visited Kashmir for the second time in 1398 and stayed here for about over two years, encouraged some shawl weavers to produce fine textures.” (18). Moti Lal Saqi writes, “About the shawl industry, there is a famous view that this fine and beneficial art was made prevalent in Kashmir by Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani. He came to Kashmir three times and was accompanied by religious scholars and expert craftsmen and artists of Central Asia, who settled down in Kashmir and made it their permanent abode. It is due to these craftsmen and artists that the shawl industry was firmly established in Kashmir and made great progress, which has rendered the world wonder-struck (19).*

II. Carpet Industry (Qaleen Baafi)

Carpet (*Qaleen*) is a floor covering consisting of a piece of thick, heavy fabric, usually with nap or pile.

The Central Asian Art that came with Shah-i-Hamadan flourished in the Valley and carved its own niche identity in the form of “*Kashmiri Qaleen*”. *Kashmiri Qaleen* are famous not only in the Indo-Pak subcontinent but are also esteemed in Europe and America. From times immemorial, *Qaleen Baafi* in Iran is famous, and eventually, with the advent of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani in the Valley, Kashmiri people espoused the Central Asian pattern of carpet weaving. People here in Valley not only learnt from Saadat but also went to Central Asia, particularly Iran, in order to learn *Qaleen Baafi and Namdasazi*. Ultimately Kashmir attained fame and popularity in *Qaleen Baafi* and thus is in second place following Iran in this craft (20). Besides the carpets, there were other arts and crafts like the *Kashmiri Gabbas*, etc. It was a unique kind of floor covering, manufactured from the old woollen blankets, and was in a variety of forms and designs, viz., appliqué or *Dal-guldar* with a circular star in the middle named the Chand, embroidery, combined appliqué and the printed ones.

III. Calligraphy (Khattati)

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, calligraphy can be defined as *“the art of producing beautiful writing, often created with a special pen or brush”*. (21) Islamic calligraphy is the artistic practice of handwriting and calligraphy based upon the alphabet in the lands sharing a common Islamic cultural heritage. It is known in Arabic as *Khatt Islami* (22). Although the roots of *Khatt Islami* are strongly tied to the Qur'an, still its scope is not strictly limited to the religious subjects. According to Masudul Hasan, *“Of all the arts that the Muslims cultivated, calligraphy was the most refined”* (23).

As far as the traces of origin and development of Islamic calligraphy in Kashmir are concerned, none other than Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadāni is regarded as the pioneer of this art in the Valley. Amir-i-Kabir was himself an expert calligrapher, and he encouraged this art in Kashmir. (24)

Professor Hamidullah Marazi, in his book *“Saints and Saviours of Islam”*, says:

“The art of calligraphy was introduced in the Valley by Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani and got its stronghold at various places in Kashmir. It was up to the period of Zainul Abidin that about two dozen beautiful and



captivating calligraphical designs, including Khat-i-Dewani, Khat-i-Rugh, Khat-i-Reehan, Khat-i-Saroo, Khat-i-Shafeeah, Khat-i-Tugra, Khat-i-Ghubar, Khat-i-Kufi, Khat-i-Gulzar, Khat-i-Maghrabi, Khat-i-Makki, Khat-i-Madani, Khat-i-Muhaqqiq, Khat-i-Mahi, Khat-i-Munhani, Khat-i-Nakhun, Khat-i-Naksh, Khat-i-Nastiliq and Khat-i-Shakastah, were developed. Though later on, from all these calligraphical forms, only three forms of calligraphy remained in vogue, i.e., Khat-i-Shakasta, Khat-i-Naksh, and Khat-i-Nastaliq. These forms are still in use. In these calligraphical forms important and rare manuscripts, royal commands, classical poetical compositions, Reshinamahs, epic literature, important documents, religious and historical writings are preserved in various academic and literary centres and research libraries, etc. It can't be claimed that in making all these art forms prevalent in the Valley, only Sayyid Ali was responsible single-handedly. However, this art form owes its origin to him to a great extent, as he initiated the process of assimilation of Persian culture and its various manifestations, including calligraphy in the valley (25).

IV. Paper Machie (Kar-i-Qalamdani)

“Paper-mâché”, literally “chewed paper”, “pulped paper”, or “mashed paper”, is a composite material

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consisting of paper pieces or pulp, sometimes reinforced with textiles, bound with an adhesive, such as glue, starch, or wallpaper paste. (26)

In Kashmir, the art was originally known by its Persian name, *Kar-i-Qalamdani*. The word “*Qalamdani*” is basically a pen case. It is also called *Kar-i-Munaqash* or painted ware. Initially, this art was only restricted to making pen cases. Nishat Ansari, while appreciating the contribution of Shah-i-Hamadan and his companions towards the development of *Qalamdani* in Kashmir, put forth that:

“Through the cultural and commercial exchange between our Valley and the external world has remained with Samarqand, Tashqand and Bukhara in general, but so far as the Kar-i-Qalamdani is concerned, it has reached to Kashmir from Iran. There is a narration in this regard that Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and the group of Saadat who accompanied him were well-versed with the arts and professions (like Kar-I-Qalamdani), which they made prevalent in the Valley. (27)

V. Embroidery

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “*Embroidery may be defined as the art or process of forming decorative designs with hand or machine*



needlework.” (28) Embroidery is the embellishing of material by means of thread, using a needle or a hook, which moves like a pen on a piece of paper to create its movements with the thread, in colour following a pattern of straight progress of the plan of playing with the line with its magic of creating a wonderful, delightful and enchanting pattern of unexplained beauty. Embroidery of *kashidakari* is a highly specialised art in Kashmir. (29) This particular art got a big boost only after the coming of Amir-i-Kabir in Kashmir. Embroidery work was mainly done in four styles: *Amlī*, *Chiken*, *Doori* and *Yarma*.

The articles produced in this work were bed covers, cushions, curtains, scarves, tablecloths, napkins, felt rugs and shawls. Besides Draping, Tea Cloth, Counterpane, Tie, Dress Pieces and Café were also made and sold rapidly. The most important patterns which were famous and liked by the people were shawls, Chinar leaf, iris, dragon and Ihassa. These patterns have replaced old conventional designs. (30)

VI. Wood Work, Stone Work and Wicker Work

Woodwork was an ancient industry of Kashmir. There are many ancient references to this industry. Woodwork was the paying profession in Kashmir before the coming of *Mohammadans*. (31) But it was used for



making houses only and was not preferred for the construction of monumental worship architecture for a long time. It was for the first time that large worship buildings were made when Islam arrived there, i.e., with the advent of Shah-i-Hamadan. (32)

It has been estimated that more than twelve hundred idol makers were present in the valley on the advent of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadāni. With the Islamisation of the valley, idol-carving was shunned at large by the Kashmiri people. In order to provide them an alternative way of earning a livelihood, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani facilitated their earning by encouraging them to take the profession of stone carving and handicrafts by the agency of the artisans (saadat) who had accompanied him. (33)

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “*Wickerwork may be defined as the work consisting of interlaced pliable twigs or branches.*” (34) In Kashmir, artisans make baskets, racks, furniture, etc., from the willow. However, in the form of the Kanger (portable brazier), the art of willow work appears to have reached its perfection in Kashmir. (35) This industry was also given strong impetus by Shah-i-Hamadan.

VII. Architecture:

With the establishment of Islam in Kashmir through the Shah-i-Hamadan, however, it was the time that the various companions (*saadat*) along with him also came to Kashmir, who, besides the other aspects, also affected the existing pattern of art and architecture in Kashmir. (36) Shah-i-Hamadan also introduced the concept of Muslim architecture by constructing *Khanqahs*, mosques and tombs (37) on the pattern, which was totally new to Kashmir. Prior to Muslims, stone was preferred over wood and brick as a constructing material for the temples, as it is quite evident from the extensive ruins of temples built by the Hindu Rajas of Kashmir. Whereas the Muslims mainly patronised the wood and brick work, stone was used only for foundations and special uses. The *Khatam-band* wood technique of Kashmir architecture traces its origin to Central Asia. (38) Development of Muslim architecture in Kashmir enhanced employment opportunities in the valley, thereby improving the economic sphere of society.

Shah-i-Hamadan, in addition to the above-mentioned arts and crafts, also provides a strong impetus to the development of silverwork, copperwork, *hammams* (hot baths), bookbinding and *Hashiakari* in



Kashmir. Shah-i-Hamadan directed one of his disciples to train Kashmiris in leather bookbinding, decorative covering and embossing with gold and silver. Mostly religious scriptures, sacred writings and royal correspondence were flapped in embossed leather jackets. (39) Besides, *Amir-i-Kabir* introduced community hammams instead of private family *hammams*. With every mosque, a *hammam* was constructed to serve the needs of Muslims who would come to prayers. Meanwhile, community *hammams* were constructed in each *khanqah*. The first community hammam was constructed at *Khanqah-i-Maula*, Srinagar. (40)

Conclusion

There is a considerable need for revisiting Shah-i-Hamadan's economic philosophy, for he is not only the person who established arts and crafts in the valley but also advocated earning a livelihood by *halal* means. Shah-i-Hamadan, by the dint of his wisdom, created a congenial atmosphere for the development of arts and crafts in the valley. Major spheres of the economy in Kashmir underwent a great change after his arrival. The Valley of Kashmir is highly indebted to Shah-i-Hamadan as far as the development of arts and crafts is concerned. A good number of unique arts and crafts



flourished under him in Kashmir, which soothe the eye with their intricacies. His influence was not confined to religious aspects; instead, it was well-extended to the economic, political, social and cultural aspects of life. He is regarded as the founder of the handicraft industry in Kashmir.

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The Sufi Alchemy of Travel and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Today, due to the advancement of science and technology, we have taken a lot of innovation in outward travel, but this same technology has made us so encumbered that our souls are imprisoned and our spiritual journeys and social interactions are on a decline. In today's materialistic age, there is a dire need to reconnect with our spiritual roots and embark on the spiritual journey of self-realisation. In this era of spiritual and moral crisis, Sufis teach us how to transcend the snares of the lower self (*nafs*) and to achieve higher goals.

In Islam, this world is looked upon as a temporary transitional stage of man's life, and it is reported that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said, "*Be in this world as a stranger or a wayfarer.*"



The Holy Quran comes up with a command to 'travel through the land' (29:20) and to contemplate how God began creation and makes it work according to His 'perfect design'.

It clearly makes us understand that this world is one of the greatest miracles of God, and if we observe things with a keen eye, there are clear signs in each and everything around us giving a notion that there is a perfect designer and planner behind this cosmos. This is the reality that we come across while studying the Holy Quran.

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth." (41:53)

However, it is never easy to travel, as it is at times challenging and exhausting. There are hardships and trials in travel, as is mentioned in a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ).

"Travel is a kind of torture."

The Sufis from all the orders love to travel from one place to another. They involve themselves in meeting new people, learning new things and gathering information regarding all the fields of life. Travel has a humbling effect, as it makes us realise what a tiny place we occupy in this world.



Travel is a memorable and insightful experience for those who go for it. The soul dies of dwelling at rest; it becomes more alive by perpetual soaring. Travel offers a chance to connect deeply with God, embodying '*nadhar bil Ibrah*' – looking through things to understand the reality behind creation. Travellers move beyond '*nadhar bi Shahwah*', i.e., looking at things with a strong desire, seeking the signs of God (*Ayatullah*) in every leaf, stone, and breeze. Each step becomes a reminder of God's presence, guiding one to reconnect with the Creator and discover the Ultimate Reality that sustains all of creation.

Maulana Azad once said,

"I have gained half of my knowledge from travel. Reading in solitude provided me intellectual growth, but the observations of travel broadened my mental horizons. Those who do not travel live in a limited space of experiences. Travel gives a person indirect knowledge of the history of nations; just as scientists empirically understand the reality of things, in the same way, travel provides practical knowledge of the human qualities, moods and natures of different nations."

As far as Sufism is concerned, it is all about the journey of a 'wayfarer' (*salik*) or conscious human soul towards the Ultimate Reality that lies behind temporal



existence. The life of a Sufi can be summed up as a quest for the Ultimate Truth, the quest for self-realisation as a part of the Divine Plan of existence. Hence, seeking or exploring is an essential part of a Sufi's life. There is a persistent longing for the divine beloved in a Sufi's consciousness, as is expressed in the opening lines of Rumi's 'Mathnavi'. Seeking is the practical manifestation of the concept of *Wahdat ul Wujud* (The Unity of Being), and in the words of Rumi, "What you seek is seeking you." He tells a '*salik*' to have a personal enquiry and to unfold his or her own myth,

"Don't be satisfied with stories of how things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth."

In most of the Sufi orders, travel is an integral part of the spiritual life of a Sufi.

According to Ibn Arabi,

"The whole existence, due to some reasons, is a part of 'world travel, which has no end, neither in this world nor in the hereafter. Man, from time immemorial, is a traveller who is not stationary because the basis of existence is 'movement', and if this existence ceases to move, it will return to 'nothingness'... If we understand enough that our existence is established by this movement and its death is in inertness, then we will



always make sure that we are on a travel... There are two types of travel: one is the travel that we are not made responsible for but that is a requirement of our outward state, such as business travel, economic travel, tourism travel, or those travels that sustain our outward existence, such as the travel of our breath for life. The second is the travel for which we have been made responsible, and there is a lot of good in adopting it. It is the journey of [religious life comprising of] Shariya and Tariqah." (Kitab ul Isfar)

Travel is a process of spiritual awakening as it unlocks the mysteries of the path in a splendid manner. Spiritual walks, adventures and getaways refresh minds with a broader insight to look beyond the temporal things and to search for the eternal bestowments.

According to a Sufi poet,

*"A [Sufi] friend taught me one thing well.
If you want [spiritual] light, travel.
Following this, I just set out exploring.
Since then, travel has become an integral part of my life."*

Thus, there have been many globetrotting Sufis like Ibn Arabi, Shams Tabriz, Sheikh Saadi, Rumi, Imam Ghazali, Najmuddin Kubra, Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed



Ali Hamadani, Makdum Ashraf Jehangir Simnani, Makhdum Jahaniya Jahan Gasht, etc., who travelled to different parts of the globe for spiritual nourishment.

Some Sufis would travel long distances to benefit from other Sufi sheikhs and gather spiritual blessings. Others would travel to do the *ziyarah* of Islamic historical places, khanqahs, shrines and holy relics to refresh their faith.

The Sufis undergo a state of spiritual ascension, which refers to a sort of spiritual upliftment of an individual towards the metaphysical realms of self-realisation. This spiritual odyssey demands complete annihilation (*fana*) of the ego of the individual to absorb and reflect the divine lights (*tajaliyyat*). The great Sufis like Bayazid Bistami and Ibn Arabi often refer to this state in their expressions.

Travel is always rewarding, as it takes an individual close to his purpose or destination. The question is, what can be the best reward for a spiritual odyssey? The answer is 'self-realisation through Godliness', and this is what Sufis are offering.

Syed Ali Hamadani – the undisputed religious and spiritual leader of Kashmiri Muslims – considers it crucially important to undergo a physical and

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metaphysical travel for achieving proximity with Allah. He says,

“The ways to Allah are numerous, but they can be broadly divided into three categories.

1. The first is the '*Rah-i-Arbab-i-Muamalah*' (the path of those who obey only external rules of the religion). This road is traversed by common Muslims, who perform only the obligatory duties prescribed by the religion and are a means for their salvation. But *wisa-i-haqiqi* (real union) cannot be performed by such external devotion.

2. The second path is that of '*Arbab-i-mujahidah*' (those who undergo self-mortification) and is adopted by the *abrar*, the righteous ones of the community. The basic principle of this path is to wean the *nafs* from evil.

3. The third path is followed by the '*Sairan-i-Hazrat-i-Samadiat*' (travellers to the court of the Most High). This is the most perfect and the noblest of all the paths and is based on killing one's own will. Those who travel this path attach themselves to the Eternal and soar high in the space of *lahut*, the last stage of the mystic journey.” (See, *Islam in Kashmir*, M A Wani, p.268)

Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani is believed to have travelled the whole Islamic world three



times and obtained the blessings from the great scholars and saints of his time. One can easily understand how difficult these travels would have been in those times without the conveniences of the present era. There were no roads, no convenient means of transport, and there were the dangers of wild animals and robbers. The mules, horses and camels were used to travel from one place to another. The unfavourable weather conditions would make the travel more difficult. His travels continued for about 21 years. Actually, travel was an integral part of his '*mujahida*', i.e., striving in the path of God.

"And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good." (29:69)

Hardships offer challenges that are to be undertaken by a Sufi to make his '*tazkiyya*', i.e., the spiritual purification. The trials and tribulations act as a barrier against the materialistic propensities and help in attaining higher spiritual goals. Rumi accepts these trials as the essential part of this learning experience.

"If you are irritated by every rub, how will your mirror be polished?"

There is no 'polishing' without 'rubbing', and it is 'rubbing' which enlightens you.



The existence of man is also a world in itself; rather, some Sufis have declared it the greatest world (Aalam e Akbar), which strives for tranquillity by passing through all the stages within its existence. The Sufi considers the rest as equal to a grain in front of the observed truth, and nothing in the world could backtrack him. The real purpose of Sufi travel is to promote brotherhood and learning during the interaction with people. This is why Syed Ali Hamadani (RA) was made responsible for extensive travel by his first spiritual guides at the age of twenty-two after his spiritual perfection. The people of Kashmir were also blessed with Islam because of this tour. He says,

“I travelled three times a quarter (Ruba Maskun) of the world. And after the completion of the spiritual odyssey, I was ordered to travel physically on earth... Spiritually, my blessed forefather, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself was my guardian on this journey. He guided me in every difficult moment because the sole purpose of this journey was to serve the people, propagate Islam and promote the teachings of the Shariya.”¹

Shāh-e-Hamadān's travels have a distinguished position in the spiritual pilgrimages of the Sufis. During his travels, he carried out the work of preaching, serving the people, and providing social and economic relief to

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the common people. He travelled to Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Kashmir, Baltistan, Ladakh, Skardu, Badakhshan, Khatlan, Khutan, Kashghar, Samarkand, Tashkent, Tibet, Transoxiana, Sri Lanka, Baghdad, Syria, Turkey, India, and Afghanistan, etc. In Kashmir, he is credited with having converted thousands of people to Islam and bringing about a socio-cultural and economic transformation.

Muhammad Ashraf Wani, referring to *Khulasat ul Manaqib*, writes in his book *Islam in Kashmir*,

“Syed Ali Hamadani spent almost his whole life travelling. Before he came to Kashmir, he had visited many a time different places of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Arabia, Central Asia, China, Afghanistan and the North West Frontier of India. It was during this siyahat that he met about one thousand and four hundred Sufi masters besides other people. About his extensive travels and repeated visits to places where he found changed socio-cultural environments between the intervals of his trips, he says,

'I travelled [the world] thrice from the west to the east and witnessed many a marvel in land and sea. Each time I found that [marked] changes had occurred in the customs and mores of the people between the intervals of my visits to these places.'



Syed Ali Hamadani also commanded his son, Mir Muhammad Hamadani, by will that he should not preach unless he acquired adequate knowledge through undertaking extensive travel."

During his travels, he would love to take his comrades and disciples along with him. Because the 'suhbah' (Sufi companionship) makes a travel comfortable and memorable. Many times, he took Syed Ashraf Jehangir Simnani with him, who has written an account of his travels. He writes, *"I had the opportunity to see great wonders of the world with him, and in the vast deserts, I was blessed to meet some great Sufis of the time... In Yemen, he met Imam Abdullah Yafi, and then in the company of Sheikh Sultan Abu Sayyid, he met fourteen hundred Sufi saints, and the major portion of Āwrad I Fathiyya was compiled in these discourses."* 2

He purchased some land in Qarya Ali Shah in Khatlan for twelve thousand dinars and offered two rakahs of prayer there as a sign of gratitude, and then the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) appeared [in his dream] saying, "Son, I like this place as your final resting place."

In Mashhad, he had the honour of meeting Imam Musa Raza [spiritually]. In Baghdad, he visited the tombs of Sheikh Junaid Baghdadi and Sheikh Mansur Hallaj. He visited the blessed footprints of Adam (AS) in

Sri Lanka. During this difficult journey, Hazrat Sheikh Najmuddin Ahmad Al-Kubra provided spiritual guidance, telling him to resort to the Istighfar with some special words, and it made his tour easy.

Upon reaching Bukhara, three hundred and twenty-four ministers and rulers took an oath of allegiance at the hand of Shāh-e-Hamadān (RA) in the court of the emperor, and he stayed there for four months. In India, he is believed to have taken spiritual benefits from Sheikh Yahya Muniri (RA). He also visited the cave of Ashab I Kahaf, i.e., the companions of the cave mentioned in the Holy Quran. In Jerusalem, he visited Baitul Maqdis, i.e., the holy Aqsa mosque, which is a holy place in Islam, as it is the place associated with the ascension (Meraj) of Prophet Muhammad.

Throughout his life, Shāh-e-Hamadān was very busy in his travels. He could hardly get time to visit his home. He himself writes,

"I have never been able to celebrate Eid in my own home in my entire life. I have spent my entire life travelling for the purpose of preaching and establishing Islam." 3

In Rum (Turkey), he had detailed discussions with Christian scholars, and they were moved by his eloquence and spiritual magnificence. He thrice visited

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Kashmir and transformed the lives of the people forever.

One day Shāh-e-Hamadān saw Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in a dream saying,

*“O son, go to Kashmir and convert the people there to Islam. Although some Kashmiris have accepted Islam, they are worse than infidels and polytheists.”*⁴

He visited Baltistan twice, and in Baltistan and Turkistan, he spent five years. For the first time, he visited Baltistan via Zojila Pass after returning from Kashmir. Shāh-e-Hamadān visited Skardu and converted a good number of people to Islam. In Kharidong, he built a mosque, and then at Ghamba Skardu, he established Jumma prayer there as well. In Shaghar, he found the people playing Chogan (a game like polo); taking advantage of the gathering, he invited them to Islam. They demanded a miracle (Karamah), and Shāh-e-Hamadān moved a huge immovable rock at their request, converting them to Islam. Many scholars mention that Shāh-e-Hamadān composed his two books, namely 'Al Muwadat Fil Qurba' and 'Dhakhirat ul Muluk', during his stay in Shaghar Baltistan. 5

It is mentioned that Shāh-e-Hamadān entered Ladakh during his second visit to Kashmir. The noted historian of Ladakh, Abdul Ghani Sheikh, writes,



“Shāh-e-Hamadān went to Turkestan via Ladakh in 1381 or 1382 AH and returned to Kashmir within two years. In those days, it took about two and a half to three months to reach Turkestan from Kashmir. Therefore, the journey there and back must have taken five or six months. The route was very difficult and dangerous. He must have stayed here for some time... There is no record regarding how long he stayed in Ladakh. According to Professor Mujeeb, he went to Zanskar, and according to local tradition, he travelled to the Ladakh-Tibet border, so he must have spent a long time in Ladakh. History tells us that during his stay in Ladakh, he did missionary work, and many people were converted to Islam.” 6

Syed Mushtaq Hamadāni writes: "When Amir Kabir (RA) came to Kashmir from Ladakh, he brought with him the raw material of Pashmina from Ladakh, and upon reaching here, he started the work of spinning and weaving Pashmina and made a Pashmina sock with his blessed hands and gave it to Sultan Qutbuddin Shahmiri as a blessing. Nishat Ansari writes that after this incident, the process of spinning and weaving Pashmina started in the Kashmir Valley, and this industry became completely prevalent here.” 7

According to local tradition, Shāh-e-Hamadān built several mosques in Ladakh, one of which is in Padma

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'Zanskar' and the other is in 'Shey'. It is said that Shey was the capital of Ladakh at that time and Shāh-e-Hamadān stayed there. Built amidst a spiritual and peaceful environment, this mosque is located about 14 kilometres from Leh. According to locals, Shāh-e-Hamadān himself built this mosque during his visit to Ladakh in 1383 AH and thus left an indelible mark on the history of the entire region. The devotion of the people of Ladakh is still associated with Shāh-e-Hamadān and his mosque. Muslims as well as non-Muslims continue to visit here and offer devotional offerings. This mosque, along with its simplicity, is a masterpiece of 8th-century architecture. According to Abdul Ghani Sheikh:

*"In the Leh Jama Masjid, which is called Shāh-e-Hamadān Mosque, a cover is placed on the monument built in his memory. According to tradition, Hazrat Amir Kabir (RA) used to worship at this place. There was an inscription in the mosque in Persian verse that attributed the Jama Masjid to Shāh-e-Hamadān (RA). A part of the mosque, where the monument of Amir Kabir (RA) is located, is called Khanqah, which is a symbol of its affiliation with a saint. Here, every morning, people recite Awrad Al Fathiyya, which was composed by Shāh-e-Hamadān (RA) himself."*⁸



Another purpose of Shāh-e-Hamadān's travels was to meet the Aulaiya Allah (the friends of Allah) and to attain spiritual blessings from them. Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes in *Islam in Kashmir*,

“According to Syed Ali Hamadani, Sufis are not only spiritually the most exalted and, therefore, most near to Allah – the status which no commoner can achieve – but they are also the reason for cosmic purposiveness, and they are the axis around which the whole universe revolves:

Whatever descends from the ever-revolving heaven,

It is only due to the grace of the men [of Allah].

If the existence of these men of sight were not there,

The compasses of existence would cease to move around.”

It is an established fact that Shāh-e-Hamadān raised the Sufi travel or religious tourism to great heights by bringing about inner and outer transformation. By his presence, he made the lives of the people better, and wherever he went, he presented the peaceful message of Islam, and with God's grace, the people responded positively to his call.

“Wherever I see your foot-steps

I see flower-dales of Paradise!” *Ghalib*

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The Sufi Alchemy of Love and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Sufism is often called, by its proponents, “the creed of love” because all Sufis, irrespective of the schools of thought they belong to, have made the theme of love a matter of main concern. For them love is the ultimate secret of the secrets (*Sir-ul-Asrar*) behind the creation of the cosmos, and if there were no love, the universe would cease to exist. The cycle of creation is attributed to the will of the creator, which loves to manifest itself in one form or the other. The mystics of all the major traditions of the world have been emphasising the development of a consciousness that derives its energy from the powerhouse of love. A consciousness that transcends the ethnic, religious and other socio-cultural boundaries. Everything that deviates a seeker from this



divine love is described as 'other', and it has no place in the consciousness of a true Sufi. Shiekh Sa'di of Sheraz puts it across like this:

'Whatever you render except the name of the beloved is in vain.

Whatever you read, except the letters of love, is in vain.

O Sa'di! wash the marks of 'Other' from the slate of heart

The knowledge which shows not the path of truth is ignorance.

The great Sufi masters, like Ghazali, Rumi and Ibn Arabi in particular, have laid special stress on the theme of love through their writings. Ghazali has written an extensive chapter in his masterpiece 'Ihya ul Uloom' on the place of love in religious experience. He has presented a detailed and magnificent analysis of this theme and has concluded with, "Love has a very high status in all the spiritual states [of a Sufi] because all other states either follow it or act as its introduction." Rumi says, 'Wherever you are, and whatever you do, be in love. Love is the bridge between you and everything. There is hardly a boundary between earthly and divine love, as both are the faces of the same coin. When a person loves someone, he or she desires perfection; thus, the earthly love may act as a prelude to divine love.



When Ibn Arabi says, 'My creed is love; wherever its caravan turns along the way, that is my belief, my faith', he opens up his heart to all the diversities of the world and boils them down into unity. For Sufis, love is not just a strong emotion but a complete philosophy of living that motivates the human soul to contemplate beauty and truth in everything. Here they seem to agree with John Keats, who says,

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know.'

From the moment a person opens his eyes to the world, God ordains every event that takes place. All is created by God in compliance with a plan and for a divine purpose. For a person willing to recognise beauty and good in all things, he finds only blessings and a divine purpose hidden within an entire complex of being. Rumi, in his magnum opus 'Mathnavi', terms this philosophy of love as 'Mazhab e Ishq', i.e., the creed of love.

"Amongst all other creeds, the creed of love is an altogether different one.

The faith and creed of the lovers is God Himself."

Rumi is not speaking of love as an end in itself but as a means through which one can feel the presence of the



Eternal Beloved. The analogy of human love as a reflection of real truth, so often expressed in Sufi poetry, has in particular left outstanding influences upon the diverse cultures through the ages. 'Aṭṭār, Rúmí, Ḥáfiz, and Jámí—to mention only a few of the great Persian poets whose works, translated into various languages, have introduced this philosophy of love to all parts of the world. Widening his compass of consciousness, Ibn Arabi says,

'My heart has become capable of every form; it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks and a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran. I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.'

The heart of a Sufi is not just occupied with the love of the creator, but it also opens itself to the love of the entire creation. A Sufi dedicates all his efforts to the restoration of peace and harmony in society, not because of any rigid sense of obedience to God, but out of love. A Sufi puts it like this: "Love conquers all. Conquer the heart of everyone around you as the Sufi law of life requires: kindness to the young, generosity to the poor, good counsel to friends, forbearance with enemies, indifference to fools and respect to the learnt." Sufis



respect the sentiments of all the faiths of the world, as they do not adhere to the dogmatic conceptions. According to them, God is not involved in any controversy because divinity is a matter of personal experience, and the love of the Creator must open minds to the love of the creation. The Sufi ideology of love effaces the myriad discriminations made on the bases of caste, creed and colour and looks forward to the establishment of unity in the cosmos. The worship of God transcends the fear of hellfire and the desire for the joys of paradise. In the words of Rabia of Basrah, "True devotion is for the love of God, not to desire heaven nor to fear hell." Love is the bridge which leads a seeker to the ultimate beauty. Love is the effacement of the lover's attributes because a lover has to adopt the attributes of the divine; these spiritual states are termed as 'fana' and 'baqa'. The lover has to go through the mystical state of self-annihilation (fana), in which the lover effaces his desires and ambitions and surrenders his will before the Divine Beloved and attains spiritual subsistence. Thus, true love is a process of self-effacement; it does not demand anything and embarks on the perilous path of self-realisation. This mystical love is selfless and fearless. It is oblivious of death and life, success and failure, acceptance and rejection, pleasure and pain, and commits itself for the sake of the divine Beloved. The



Sufi paradigm is undogmatic, flexible, tolerant and non-violent and, as a result, is suited for inter-religious dialogue, inter-cultural harmonisation and peaceful mutual co-existence.

It is not surprising that when Maulana Rumi died, his funeral was attended by people of every description. A Christian was asked why he wept so bitterly at the death of a Muslim spiritual teacher. His reply shows how love transcends every discrepancy and conquers every human soul. He replied,

“We esteem him as the Moses, the David, the Jesus of the age. We are all his followers and disciples.”

Interestingly, his epitaph reads, ” When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men.”

Mir Syed Ali Hamadani had an outstanding love for the divine, and this is what kept him always active in all fields of life. Shāh-e-Hamadān went through a tough phase of 'mujahida' in his early life, and he faced all the trials and tribulations with a smile on his face. Actually, the love of God kept him steadfast during this period. For him, the divine love is a driving force which keeps you always fresh. Most of his life passed in travels. In fact, when he passed away, he was far away from his

home. In search of the knowledge of the divine, he interacted with thousands of scholars and Sufis. The dawah activism that he infused in his disciples springs from his love of God and His Prophet (ﷺ). He had a great spiritual connection with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who spiritually guided him in all the crucial decisions of life. His travel to Kashmir was spiritually guided by the Prophet (ﷺ). At times, he was spiritually guided by Sheikh Najm ud din Kubra as well. He loved to meet and interact with people. During his stay and also while travelling, he would like to enjoy the company of the people. He followed the Sufi trend of Futuwah, i.e., the scared manhood in which the love of the people is especially stressed.

In fact, he believed in establishing a spiritual connection with God's creation as advocated by the great Sufi saints of Islam. Spiritual consciousness is the golden thread that unites different kinds of people together and razes the barriers of caste, creed and colour. Shāh-e-Hamadān dedicated his entire life to making efforts towards developing that spiritual consciousness in human society. While advising the rulers of his time, he writes,

"The ruler's justice and fairness should be for all subjects, and in this matter, there should be no

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distinction between those who are worthy or unworthy of kindness, because the king is the shadow of God, and the mercy of God includes every disbeliever and believer. In the same way, the ruler's kindness should be for everyone, good and bad." 1

According to him, "All the king's subjects are God's creatures, so it is the king's religious duty to protect the rights of the weak against the powerful." 2

In a letter, he writes to Sultan Qutbuddin,

"Remember that the elders among your subjects should be dear to you like your father; treat the subjects well as children. Show fatherly affection to their children. Uprooting the oppressors, responding to the cries of the oppressed, and reforming the wicked are the prime duties of a ruler." 3

Shāh-e-Hamadān's preoccupation with divine love is reflected in his many books, including *Chihil Asrar*, *Masharib ul Azwaq*, *Dah Qayida*, *Maktubat I Amiriyya*, *Minhaj ul Arifeen* and *Dhakhirat ul Muluk*.

His collection of mystical ghazals, '*Chihil Asrar*' in particular, emanates from his love and longing for the ultimate beauty. The book contains 41 mystical poems that explore themes of love, devotion, and spiritual awakening. Prof. Munawwar Masudi writes,



“*Chihil Asrar*” is filled with the grandeur and glory of the Divine Beloved. In each ghazal, the emotions of love and affection flow like flowing water. The poet always seems to be filled and intoxicated by the diffused light of his beloved, his appearance, and fragrance.”⁴

Like *Tarjuman Al Ashwaq* of Ibn Arabi, *Chihil Asrar* also delves into the intricate relationship between God and the world and the unique spiritual bond between God and man. It explores the essence of divine love, the mystical interpretation of religious beliefs. In the first ghazal, Syed Ali Hamadani writes,

“O Beloved (God), those in love with Thee care not for wealth;

Love for Thy pious existence has made life and paradise insignificant for them.

In their quest, the poor wanderers have searched for Thee in the heavens.

For a union with Thee, they have renounced both the worlds.”

Giving an earthly touch to the divine beauty, in the second ghazal, he writes,

“His radiant face is the arbiter of my heart.



And the dust of his road is the Kaba of my soul and life.

*It was only when the fragrance of His hair spread all over
the world*

That love and harmony came into existence.

Faith and heresy, light and darkness came into being.

Because of His moony face and dark hair.” 5

Shāh-e-Hamadān has written a commentary on *Qasida Khumariyya* of Ibn Al Faridh, an Arab poet whose expression of Sufi mysticism is regarded as the finest in the Arabic language, and this book is titled *In Mashariq ul Azwaq*. Many of Ibn al-Fāriḍh’s poems are odes on the lover’s longing for reunion with his beloved. This long *qaṣīdah* describes the effects of the wine of divine love. Shāh-e-Hamadān is so moved by his love theme that he explains his expressions in a beautiful language. At the beginning, he writes,

“All praise and perfect gratitude is due to the Loving Creator, who made the sincerity and loyalty in His love for those great souls who are infatuated with His beauty and who made the entrance to the taste of those whose hearts are enamoured with the fire of His glory.” 6

The love of Shāh-e-Hamadān emanates from his belief in *Wahdat ul Wujud* (the unity of being), and for

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him, the beauty of the universe is the reflection of the Divine Beauty. He writes,

“Every part is attracted towards its origin and every human being is related to his own kind. It is mentioned in the Hadith that God Himself is beautiful and loves beauty. Since beauty is the eternal attribute of the Absolute Beauty, and naming someone as beautiful or considering someone as beautiful is only due to the Absolute Beauty. So, in reality, there cannot be more than one Beautiful. He is the one who has no partner in beauty. Therefore, the beauty and magnificence that appear on the pages of the existence of individuals and the appearances of beings in different levels of creation are the reflection of God's beauty which appears in the manifestations and appearances according to the abilities and characteristics of individuals, as reflections are seen in mirrors.”⁷

In *Minhaj ul Arifeen*, he advises adopting a disciplined life. He advocates high morals and ethics to be followed for a successful life. He advises his followers to love all kinds of people for a strong connection with the Almighty.

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Mir Syed Ali Hamadani's Arrival and Institutionalization of Sufism in Kashmir

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Spiritualism is an esoteric or inward (*batin*) aspect of Islam which encompasses the direct contemplation of sacred or divine realities. Since time immemorial, Kashmir has been calling out the seekers of solace, for its pristine waters, beguiling greenery, ever-condescending mountains, snow-clad peaks, wavering fragrant breezes, and an unending oasis of mesmeric landscapes with their flower-lit springs, dazzling starlit summer nights, charming autumn full moons, and piercing winter silences, ever remain a fulfilling experience for a wandering mind, longing heart and a seeking soul.

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Kashmir is famous in the world for its picturesque beauty that nature has bestowed upon her to such an extent that this region is also known as a paradise on earth. Its environment being full of peace and tranquillity has produced and attracted lots of personalities who were in search of absolute reality and wanted to dissolve their existence with nature's ecstatic dance by meditating without any worldly interference. This perseverance has remained so passionate that even before the emergence of Islam, this region had been a heart of spiritual experiences by the saints to unravel the secrets and mysteries of the Truth and evolved to be known as *Rishewaaer* (The Garden of *Rishis*).

Kashmir never, across history, was an isolated national realm but always an applicable and viable place for international resources. Travellers of human history in their travelogues always have had a special mention pertaining to Kashmir. Emperors, kings and rulers all essayed their strengths to claim the honour of being linked to Kashmir; ruins across the Valley are witness to it. *Pandavas* of the epic *Mahabharata* have left many sculptures as their landmarks. Moreover, this region always attracted a thinking mind and an absorbing heart and an accomplished thought.



The surroundings laid a great impact on the psyche of the people of Kashmir to make them nature loving. The onset of Islam in this region was welcomed by the then Buddhist ruler *Rinchana* (who was in search of truth) when one of the great saints of *the Suhrawardi* order, namely *Sayyid Sharf ud Din Bulbul*, was meditating on the bank of the river Jehlum, and *Rinchen Shah*, along with his wife, experienced the spiritual exchange with the saint and embraced Islam and adopted the name Sadr ud Din. Rinchana, in search of truth and the right path, ultimately came into contact with Sayyid Sharfu'd-Din, commonly known as Bulbul Shah, a disciple of Shah Nimatu'llah Farsi of the Suhrawardiya order of Sufis, who had come to Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva from Turkistan with one thousand fugitives from the Mongol invasion. (1)

The process continued, and with the passage of time, the majority of the population in Kashmir was attracted towards Islam and embraced it as the way of spending their lives in enlightenment, certainly with the untiring efforts of the Saints such as *Haz. Shāh-e-Hamadān*. *Mir Sayyid Ali Al Hamadani*, *Haz. Sayyid Muhammad Hisari*, *Haz. Sayyid Husain Simnani* and *Haz. Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamadāni*, predominantly, by their character and spiritual influences, and then Kashmir became popular as *Pirewaer* (The Garden of Saints).



Unquestionably, there has been a great role of *Sufis* in shaping the spiritual fabric of Kashmir; the *Sufi* shrines and *Khangahs* are witnesses to the fact of how prosperous those centres have been in not only spreading enlightenment amongst the masses but also in configuring the socio-politico-economic structure of this region.

Sayyid Ali's activities in Kashmir are highly appreciated as regards the spread of Islam in the region. He widely travelled in the Valley, accompanied by his disciples and followers. He left a few of his disciples and followers. He left a few of his disciples at a number of places in Kashmir, which were the centres of Hindu religion. These disciples of Sayyid Ali built mosques and hospices at these centres, and gradually they emerged as important centres of preaching Islam. Thus, Islam in Kashmir received great impetus due to the efforts of his disciples. (2)

Shāh-e-Hamadān's multifaceted personality created a great impact and transformed the people's perception to live a civilised, moral and spiritual life and that too with contentment. Hz. Shaikh Yaqoob e Sarfi says:

Een Hamadani Hama dani dehad
Muarifate Sirre nihani dehad

Likewise, Allama Iqbal says:
Sayyid us Saadaat Saalaare Ajam
Daste oo meamare taqdeere umam
Khitta raa aan shahe darya aasteen
Daad ilm o sanat o tahzeeb e Deen

This region in the past showed greater transitions with respect to religious, social and cultural dimensions, and never, ever, has any army come to win the hearts of people, be it the period before Buddhism or post-Buddhism. It is famous that Kashmir had its first dwelling possible after the spiritual power of *Kashapa* came to defeat the demon enemy of Kashmir, so it is always a symbolic enemy in every era, be it the 21st century or post-21st century, so to defeat this enemy of people, there is always a need for spiritual intervention, which could create love among the learnt, unlearnt, lettered and unlettered people of this beautiful race. Kashmir has always witnessed the greater explanation of defeat time and again.

Kashmir has the distinction of being one amongst such places in the world where Islam was spread through spiritual (*Sufistic*) influences and thus, exhibited a great degree of tolerance, love and peace amongst the masses. The people of this region embraced Islam primarily by experiencing its spiritual



manifestations, which were propagated and transmitted by the then Saints (*Sufis*), who had come here mostly from Central Asia –the then treasure of spiritual movements and orders.

It is towards the closing phase of Sultan Shihabuddin's reign (1354-1373) that four Saiyids arrived in Kashmir from Central Asia. They were Saiyid Husain Simnani, Saiyid Tajud-din, Saiyid Hasan Bhadur and Saiyid Haider. It was at the instance of Saiyid Ali Hamadani that these four Saiyids (who were also his close relations) came to Kashmir with a special mission to see and report to him whether Kashmir provided favourable conditions for preaching Islam. (3)

To quote Stein, “Islam made its way in Kashmir not only by forcible conquest but by gradual conversion through Sufis and Saints.” Shāh-e-Hamadān emerges as a pivotal personality in history who gave a direction to the people (non-believers already possessing the quest to know about the Absolute Reality) and led them to the straight path.

Essentially, Shāh-e-Hamadān was a sincere and dedicated servant of Islam. It was his missionary zeal for Islam which brought him from his native Hamadan to Kashmir in the fourteenth century AD. Islam had been introduced here before his arrival but on a very limited

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scale. In making it the religion of Kashmir's masses, his role was, undoubtedly, the most significant. (4)

When *Ameer e Kabeer* came to Kashmir, the spirituality was imbibed by everyone without any caste, colour or religion, which had a definite reason for the people of Kashmir. So, to erect a grand spiritual palace of a non-violent paradise again in Kashmir, there is an immediate need to show interest in order to create a base for that which would spread the colour of progress for making our ill-looking uncertain future wonderful and dominant over the prevailing chaos of present day.

The seeds of spirituality sown by Shāh-e-Hamadān started to sprout with grandeur when his son, *Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani*, in accordance with his testament, arrived here after completing his education and started to teach and preach Islam.

Soon after his arrival in Kashmir, Mir Muhammad plunged himself into the activity of teaching and preaching Islam. The most important person who accepted Islam at his hands was a high Hindu official, Suha Bhatta, who became his devout follower. (5)

Mir Muhammad continued his mission with great zest and zeal along with his companions of the Kubrawiyah order, such as *Sayyid Husain Shirazi*, *Sayyid*

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Ahmad Simnani, Sayyid Muhammad, Sayyid Sadr ud Din, Sayyid Husain Khwarazmi, Sayyid Jalal ud Din Bukhari, Sayyid Muhammad Madani and Sayyid Alau ud Din Bukhari. Many other personalities associated with the Kubrawiyah order who played a very important role in continuing the mission further; to mention a few of them: *Sayyid Hasan Mantiqi, Shaikh Baha-ud Din Kubrawi and Shaikh Yaqoub Sarfi* (one of the teachers of *Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi*). There is a tremendous contribution of various personalities in creating a treasure of literature (both published and unpublished) written about various dimensions of *Sufism* by these saints as masterpieces wherein the *Sufi* experiences and observations have been incorporated.

There was yet another historical interface of *Mir Muhammad Hamadani* with *Shaikh-ul Aalam Shaikh Noor ud Din Noorani*, which proved to be quite significant for this region as far as the development of the Rishi order and the spread of the Kubrawiyah order are concerned.

The period when Sufis from Persia and Central Asia began to pour into Kashmir coincided with the development of an indigenous Sufi order known as the Rishi order, which encouraged a life of co-existence with all human beings. (6)



The interaction proved to be very fruitful in terms of spreading Islam, so to say that from the last more than six hundred years now, the patron saint of this region, *Shaikh-ul-Aalam*, went on soothing the generations of this region with his teachings and poetry in a local language, which had a great impact on the people from all walks of life, irrespective of caste, colour and creed. *Shaikh-ul Aalam* carries a distinct and iconic status for this region. He not only played a great role in awakening the people against the tyranny but also influenced all the then-existent ideologies by the fundamentals of Sufism and Gnosticism.

The simplicity and purity of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din's life have deeply impressed the Kashmiris, who entertain the highest veneration for the saint. Anecdotes of his life are on the lips of the people throughout the valley. (7)

Historians, scholars and researchers have acknowledged *Shaikh-ul Aalam's* great intellect, insight, linguistic hold on his poetics, and political and social vision in his works. Anecdotes associated with the life and teachings of *Shaikh-ul Aalam* reveal that he was conscious about the defects of the society in which he lived in and therefore yearned for a society based on moral values and equality. He urged people to make every possible effort to help and feed the poor. The great



daughter of *Vitasta*, i.e., *Lala Arifah*, acclaimed him as her spiritual master (*Murshid*); *Abul Fuqara Naseeb ud Din Gazi* mentioned in his *Noornama Gaziya* the spiritual relation between the *Shaikh ul Alam* and *Mir Sayyid Hussain Simnani*. *Sultan-ul Arifeen Shaikh Humzah Makhdoom* – an epitome of spirituality – used to visit frequently at the *Shaikh's* tomb to pay obeisance and to quench his spiritual thirst.

Afghan Governor *Raja Sukh Jeewan Mal* nominated a renowned Persian scholar and poet to write *Alamdaar's* biography, and *Ata Muhammad Khan* struck gold and silver coins in *Alamdaar's* name.

In fact, the *Afghan* Governor, *Ata Muhammad Khan*, gave, as it were, expression to public sentiment when coins were struck by him in the name of *Shaikh Nur-ud-Din* in 1223-25 A.H., 1808-10 A.C. No other saint, perhaps, in “human history” has ever had coins struck in his honour. (8)

Shaikh-ul Aalam's message is not confined to a particular race or creed but in fact has a universal appeal and is addressed to mankind as a whole. *Shaikh-ul Aalam* expressed his thoughts in a simple language to his people and incorporated similes and examples familiar to them, and his *shruks*, therefore, had an immediate appeal to the unlettered masses as well.



As I mentioned earlier, the people of Kashmir embraced Islam under the influence of *Sufis*, and the impact is so strong that they have, by and large, adhered to the Islamic faith and practices associated *with the Sufi culture* of tolerance, accommodation and harmony for the last 700 years without any apparent serious difference or conflict between sects or religions. Notwithstanding that, from the later part of last century, differences among sects or religions have surfaced, and the culture of tolerance and accommodation has diluted with adverse effects on peace and harmony, which has led the people of Kashmir towards a big spiritual vacuum. In fact, to undermine and trivialise the real message and philosophy of *Tasawwuf*, there is a type of critical incompetence, alas, too frequent, that tries to hide its native sterility behind a barrage of fine and impressive words. Vague thinking, ill-formed generalisations, diffusive and rambling developments of half-baked ideas often acquire a deceptive appearance of exactness and solidity by the well-known trick of camouflaging words.

To conclude, in the present chaotic upheaval of global happenings, the fundamentals of human values have come under severe disqualification, and amongst these values, the most strived for is peace of mind, which has often been breached on one pretext or the other. But

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if one turns the leaves of history, it becomes evident that individuals even in messy times generally enjoyed a peaceful orientation, but in our times, the most severely hit segment of serenity is an individual, which results in a restless family and a reactive society. It is thus very important to find a way out which can at least bring human beings together under the overwhelming influence of an atmosphere of tranquillity. In such an unpleasant atmosphere, spirituality is the tool which can gradually grow and will take the shape of the soul for every aspect of life.

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Revisiting Mir Syed Ali Hamadani: Some Considerations

Dr. Mohammad Maroof Shah

It has been said about Ibn Arabi that none know him today; one can transpose it about Mir Syed Ali Hamadani as well and say that none know him in Kashmir today and arguably in India. Regarding the number of visits he made, the genealogy of his visit, his relationship to local Rishis, his attitude towards religious others, his politics and appraisal of his heritage in the context of pre-Islamic Kashmiri heritage, his letters and political theology, and appropriations of his lore by later Sufis in Kashmir, scholarly/popular opinions remain divided. We have explored certain aspects of Shah-i Hamadan, but the deepest aspect that informed all his work is so little explored. We haven't



been able to resolve certain seeming inconsistencies in the work of Hamadani. A saint who preaches unity of existence and transcendent unity of faiths orders or endorses a statewide campaign of iconoclast Sikandar, who is an anathema to Pandits and more Sufi-minded people, and the Reshi project is the hero of Hamadani. He is believed to have been extremely disrespectful of yogis and invoked to dismiss as *istadraj* supernatural feats accruing from other faiths. I read a passage from Syed Ali, the historian, about Syed Ali, the saint.

The question is, was he a saint or a political ideologue for whom imposing a certain version of Islam was of paramount importance? Yes, he converted many people to Islam from different faiths in different locations, but the question is: did he impose himself on others or was he desperate for their conversion, or did conversion just happen? Somewhere people came forward seeing his miracles and somewhere seeing his spiritual excellence.

As such, certain considerations are hereby proposed for presenting certain aspects of Syed Ali Hamadāni that may help in revisiting divergent approaches or appraisals of his heritage.

Shah-i-Hamadan was held with great reverence by Sultan Qutb al-Din in and outside his court, but “there is not a single piece of evidence mentioning direct or



indirect participation of Shah-i-Hamadan in politics. Although it is said that he had a great impact on the Sultan through timely teachings, advice, theories, justifications, decisions and the principles of the Quran and Sunnah.

He was a great profounder of earning one's own livelihood and rejected the traditional means of patronage.

He wasn't restricted to one *Pir*, one Sufi school, one place or one path. His little-studied *Rasa'il* call for special attention. His sagely work shows that he can be approached in terms other than purely religious, and as such, his ethical-philosophical standpoint calls for a study on its own terms. In his collection of sayings in *Minhaj-ul-Aarifeen*, he does not make any reference to a particular faith, and what is promised to seekers is nothing short of liberation or salvation. Like Sadi, he transcends the religious barriers and presents some useful guidance. Every Kashmiri should be exposed to essential Hamadani's ethico-spiritual manual in the form of *Minhaj al-Arifeen*. It may be included in the syllabus of matric, and there should be a practical test in ethics. In his *Chihal Asrar* we don't find Muslim centrism or anxiety to be of a particular faith. Rather, boundaries are transcended even between faith and



heresy or disbelief, not to speak of between rival faiths.

Mirat at-Tayibeen needs to be considered in the context of debates on theologies of exclusion of sinners. Logic underlying major sins explicated by him we need to take note of. As many paths to God as breaths or sand particles, but the shortcut is serving people, wiping tears of others. He invited people to Islam with an emphasis on the esoteric dimension, thus inviting all to the essence of all religions, the deeper truth invoked in every religion. About Rumi, it has been reported that Christians went to him to deepen their understanding of mysteries of faith.

We need to note readings from his work on political thought that focus on lofty ethical and spiritual teachings echoed across traditions that are necessary for good governance. The first lesson there is how central and sacred the task of politics is.

The question is how can we establish, to our satisfaction, that Hamadani was a saint? There are historians who approach the question genealogically and come up with primarily political explanations for the exodus and migration of *Sadat*. There are people who see it as a matter of class war and highlight differences between indigenous Rishis and foreigners as agents of the ruling elite seeking cultural domination

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through the garb of religion. There are also scholars who highlight linguistic barriers to argue that Shah-i-Hamadan was less important as compared to Sheikh-ul-Aalam. There are some who discredit Sayyids of spirituality and dispute the historical veracity of *Khat-i-Irshad*.

There have been some sectarianists who have been playing with the idea of Hamadāni's supposed 'tashiyyu' and trying to raise disturbing questions over his strategies to woo converts. There can be a question as to why contemporary chroniclers are silent regarding him, and this gives them a lot of room for speculation. I briefly comment upon these questions and then try to argue how we can check the credentials of Hamadani through the impact he has made and is still making as a cultural force and a symbol in the collective memory of Kashmiris. He lives like Sheikh Nuruddin in the hearts of Kashmiris despite linguistic or other barriers.

Those who argue that Hamadāni was a '*bagoda*' who had to escape the wrath of Timur and then justified his coming through hagiographic and religious factors miss the important point that genealogies only help to illuminate very superficial parts of the story. Origins don't explain things; they only give contexts. It is true he had problems with the administration in his native land,



but how can a ruler's attitude towards a person be taken to be non-political and without other biases? Is Timur an exemplary king who delivered justice to his colonies and subjects? Geologically, the Prophet of Islam too resorted to the strategy of escaping and seeking influence in a new territory of Medina. Does it mean his mission of prophecy can be questioned? Missionaries of Sufism too had chequered histories and mostly had difficult relationships with the rulers. Sheikh Nuruddin too faced stiff political opposition, but we don't approach him through the lens of politicians of his period.

Those who highlight differences between Rishis and Sayyids ignore the fact that religion and mysticism are communicated through other media than formal preaching or ideological propaganda. Islam has elsewhere spread more through the example of Sufis lofty character and spiritual power than through neatly typed pamphlets or fiery speeches on public platforms. A saint can talk to you and influence you by tapping on the language of the heart and by simply exuding his grace through mere presence or attention. Traders who spread the word of Islam used no formal propaganda machinery or translation departments in alien lands. History shows that linguistic barriers have not been great deterrents for the spread of spiritual/religious missions.



The proposition that Sayyids were complicit with the ruling elite and had little mass support or could not feel the pulse of the masses is belied by history. Masses were empowered both spiritually and socio-economically with the advent of Sayyids. Sayyids helped generate for them employment opportunities. They brought with them the great cultural legacy of Arab-Persian civilisations. They have been silent architects of the cultural and literary growth story that fructified in the production of such geniuses as Sarafi and Sufi poets. Even we can attribute to Sayyids the emergence of Sheikh Nuruddin, Lalla and Makhdoom Sahib, who are three key figures in Kashmir's religious and social landscape. Sayyids live through these fellow Rishis/mystics. If we celebrate Sheikh Nuruddin and Lalla's cultural presence, we indirectly celebrate the great Sayyids with whom they interacted. If it is folk memory that is the major source of knowing our Reshis, how can it be discounted as evidence in the case of Sayyids? It is folk memory that has preserved key transforming events in the lives of Lalla or Alamdar, and these involved interaction with Sayyids. How is Khanqahi Moalla the spiritual centre for common Kashmiris to this day? Why do our Sufis, including Majzubs, throng there? Why do common Kashmiris call him Ameer? Ask those who have been living lives as

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Sufis regarding Ameer and Khanqah. This, rather than a rationalist historical account, is more reliable as documentary evidence to understand Hamadāni's impact and cultural presence.

Here people, including myself, are ignorant of the symbolism of designs on carpets, shawls, paper-mâché works, etc. And we can see unconscious assimilation of the great cultural history that involves the use of such symbolism. We continue to remember the cultures of Islam and Persia in these designs and speak the language of the heart.

Why did Hamadāni choose Ladakh, a difficult terrain, as part of his mission? And how far he succeeded there is open history. The narrative of a village visited by him and hosted by way of offering milk that is famous for milk production emphasises the point of cultural presence.

Hamadāni's treatise *Zakhirat ul Muluk* argues the case of the weak against the strong as it asserts that the state that fails to protect the weak against the strong has no legitimacy. It puts such a condition on rulers that a power-hungry politician will never choose to rule such a state. Hamadani's conception of state is not to be understood in light of modern political theory but in light of ancient and mediaeval ideas on regality and its



sacred links. Hamadāni didn't seek power. He resigned from a powerful position in his homeland on moral grounds and came to Kashmir on a mission, and that mission lives on in the cultural, literary and spiritual landscape.

These scattered points also set the scene for exploring his politics and apparently mediaeval notions that are seen as problematic by modern sensibility. This we deal with now in the next section, and we reproduce a few excerpts from previous writings on the same published in the local daily *Greater Kashmir* and then conclude by considering the case of universal Hamadani in his *Minhaj al-Aarifeen*.

Now we need to consider the key problem of implementing Islam in the secular age and the discomfort that may be experienced by his readers, especially in his theological-political writings, including his *Zakhirat ul Muluk* and letters to kings. The latter may be cited as an inspiration for political Islam fighting for the implementation of an Islamic state. On the surface, a very convincing case is formed by taking certain isolated pages and paragraphs or statements from it. One can cite statements calling for treating other religious communities as second-class citizens, for moral policing, and for exclusive ideological systems that are



fundamentally intolerant of religious and ideological others. The question is, how do we today relate to our mediaeval authorities and contest their framing in the currently fashionable violent mode of political Islam? No mediaeval text may be taken unquestionably in the face of changed realities in the world that necessitate the reconstruction of Islamic political thought in light of now largely neglected traditionalist political thought. This will also require taking cognisance of secularising currents of political thought, however. Hamadani has to be read in light of traditional political thought which informs, partly, some of the best minds in modern political thought. The idea of the traditionalisation of political thought that I call for, partly building on Hamadani, is what neither so-called radical Islam nor reformist Islam nor revivalist Islam stands for in letter and spirit. This rather than embracing a secular model of polity that vetoes the Sacred Order is what I call for and see Hamadani calling for.

To engage with the “problematic” content – to modern sensibility, including Sufi sensibility – of his writings, especially *Zakhirat ul Muluk*, on which I focus, I first delineate key elements of what is supposed to constitute this problematic content. This problematic content is, first of all, his what appears to be extreme “obsession” with Shariyah implementation in general



and then all the debatable inferences that raise eyebrows, including such edicts as a ban on music, the institution of strict moral policing and, most importantly, his appropriation of Hazrat Omar's precedent for a strict implementation of what is called by modern critics a manifesto for second-class citizenship for other religious communities.

In the beginning we need to emphasise the point that Hamadāni is a Sufi through and through and has clearly stated his doctrine of unity of being that excludes any construction of a religious other in the sense that would warrant othering or marginalising on religious grounds.

The question of *shariah* implementation that has been an object of heated debate between Islamists and their religious and secular critics may be understood better if separated into two elements, viz. invoking God's sovereignty or final authority for everything in Revelation and pushing for certain legalistic opinions supposed to constitute *shariyah*. Let us note that all traditional authorities across cultures and religions agree on the first clause in their own way. Traditional political thought is more or less Platonic, invoking the care of the self or soul as the chief end of politics and that to be achieved through attention to transcendental



moorings and grounding of ethico-spiritual enterprise in suprarational traditional founts that the notion of the Sacred books/Revelation connotes. There is no purely secular ideal envisaged in traditional political theory, and thus there can't be in Hamadani either. What is to be debated is not dispensability of God's sovereignty or Sacred Law but what it exactly means to invoke God as Lawgiver and distinguish between God's laws and human interpretations of them. Let us note that the father of Western philosophy has also written a book on the type of *Zakhirat ul Muluk* called *Laws*, and we have highly respected political philosopher Voegelin arguing for it. Muslims, generally speaking, can't, as believing people, have issues with mediaeval political thought on either the notion of divine sovereignty or the primacy of sacred law. Critics of the model of Islamisation of State (in whom one can name not only leading modernist scholars but well-known authorities from the traditional ulema camp (we know big names separating from Jamaat e Islami disagreeing on Syed Maududi's interpretation or model of Islamic State) don't imply thereby any disrespect for the Sacred Law or God's ultimate sovereignty. There are theological and political philosophical critiques of the essentially modern notion of an Islamic State. One can cite philosophers such as Al-Farabi and modern scholars from Abdel Razziq to Dabashi to Wahidudin Khan and



the whole bunch who identify themselves as Muslim feminists (to be distinguished from secular feminists), all targeting a certain standard model of political Islam, but none can be accused of inauthenticity, though one might respectfully disagree with their position). One might also point out that if Shāh-e-Hamadān is to be properly read, he needs to be appreciated in light of modern Platonists and traditionalist political thinkers and such modern thinkers as Agamben and Zizek, all of whom target a certain understanding of democracy or liberal models in the name of something more foundational that is largely the concern of religion. So far, I don't know if any study has been done in this respect. Let us not forget that almost all great names in political thought till recent times have spoken for a conception of politics that is sharply divergent from the secular liberal democratic model that today seems to be largely unquestionable. How far from unquestionable this model may be gleaned from the contributors (most of which are highly regarded names, including Agamben, Zizek, Bourdieu, Rancière, and Jean-Luc Nancy in their respective fields) of a recent text, *Democracy in What State?*, on the theme of democracy. Plato and his philosopher king echoed in traditional political thought aren't irrelevant. Secular thought seems incapable of providing an ideal political model.



The notion of forbidding what is wrong one sees rather narrowly interpreted or problematically theorised from mediaeval lenses may be interpreted in light of divergent scholarly discussions on the issue. We have great diversity in opinion on what it entails, and one might cite those authorities if that is needed who side with the least interventionist models. A brilliant summary of the whole debate on what constitutes forbidding *munkaraat* may be seen in Michael Cook's *Forbidding What is Wrong in Islam*. The reader is referred to some dissenting opinions from traditional Islamic authorities on the notion of forbidding what is wrong as implying that brand of moral policing that appears reprehensible to modern sensibility.

If God is expressing Himself in a new way every moment and if time is real and if history is a source of knowledge and if life offers newer challenges almost on a daily basis calling for fresh responses and if every fresh reading of the scripture demands unearthing newer treasures of meanings previously not noticed or one has failed to properly read it and if *tafakkur* implies sensitivity to the newer or ever-changing modes and demands of experience or expressions or unveilings of Being and if God never repeats anything, we have no escape from deep thinking about received understanding regarding issues that are by definition



not unchangeable. God in His essence alone is absolutely unchangeable, and corresponding eternal laws of logic or the very structure of consciousness/intellect are unchangeable. Accordingly, we can say that it is *Ad-Deen* – uncreated wisdom, science of metaphysics or first principles that is unchangeable. All that involves space and time, socio-economic and political realms, and the domain of the will that *Shariah* or Law/Path caters to, by very definition, pulsates with what Iqbal calls the principle of movement or engenders unceasing creative vitality and thus change. Ash'arite theology and Quranic metaphysics as understood by the greatest of Islam's metaphysicians posits perpetually renewed creation.

Keeping these points in view, we seek to engage with Shah-i-Hamadan's socio-political thought, considering the fact that if he visited us today, he would hardly recognise it, as the world has witnessed several frame shift mutations. He would be compelled to edit not only the sections invoking mediaeval knowledge of some sciences (that have been corrected thanks to the progress of natural sciences) but also, in all probability, partly, some sections treating socio-political issues. Today the institution of kings he assumes or addresses is almost gone for good, and there have already developed institutions that restrain rulers. He would find much of



his job done thanks to modernity that has made rulers accountable to a theoretically independent judiciary. He would find neither slaves nor slave owners, neither feudal lords nor the land in the sense he had seen as primary wealth. He would encounter the monster of technology and other misadventures of instrumental rationality and capital besides newer colonising ideologies like development discourse (Derrick Jensen defines development as colonialism applied to the natural world). It would be easy to guess if he can afford dismissive engagement with modern political theory. The likes of Carl Schmitt and other major voices in political theology and philosophy would be approached from the insights derived from Islamic resources. We need to identify thinkers in the world, especially the Muslim world, who engage with similar problems with similar background principles that Hamadani engaged with many centuries ago. Some issues one might, at the risk of misconstruing and with due apology to the spirit of Amir-i-Kabir, seek to explain to oneself for readers to consider and better edit.

Hamadani calls for strict moral policing. *Ihtisab*, or moral policing, evokes fear today. However, even in the most secular of states, some restrictions are imposed and some are interiorised by people. Mediaeval political thought did, in its own way, achieve this. And we needn't



reject it on the ground that our freedom is curtailed. Whatsoever is compatible with the ethical or rational ideal is allowed. We also need to note that Amir-i-Kabir's target is public display of what is deemed to be illegal or immoral behaviour. You can't be persecuted by the State if you do such things in secret, in the privacy of your home. There is no scope for *jasusi* or the institution of informers or secret intelligence agencies that report to moral police. Another point is that before implementing any code, one is entitled to determine the legality or otherwise of a given practice. We have examples of practices once considered impermissible by ulama, like taking pictures and using mikes (which could well thus invite state censure), now being taken out of the prohibited list. Music, properly regulated to disallow its centrifugal tendency that distracts one from the key task of life/God consciousness, women given their due in public spaces by resorting to authentic modern interpretations of both male and female (often mislabelled feminist to brand them as unorthodox) scholars that contradict the mediaeval ones but not the scripture itself. Lastly, Dhimmis are not to be seen in light of the now contested notion of Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam that was invented when people and nations knew so little of each other, including each other's beliefs and cultures. The notion of Jihad remains eternally



relevant because the fight against injustice and oppression that proscribes freedom to live life according to the Divine Measure seems to be eternally warranted as people are not going to relinquish vested ideological/class/gender interests. However, scriptural resources that talk about common elements between traditions warrant extending the notion of Ahle Kitab to other than Jewish and Christian religions, as we are discovering all traditional communities invoking some equivalent of scripture received by earlier generations, such as the Covenant of Medina that used the coexistence rather than confrontational/othering/marginalising model, increased recognition of the possibility of demonstrating a unanimous tradition preserved through oral and other cultural means. However, the unique claim of Islamic tradition that its scripture is unsullied by historical forces and thus preserved in original purity, coupled with the understandable warrant for preserving its distinctive contours, including Ummah centrism of the Islamic community that needn't, however, be interpreted as implying political domineering or expansionist terms as an equivalent of Pax Americana, needs to be recognised by all who want a homogenised, secularised global world. Islam does reject the Sacred denying materialist/capitalist worldview and thus it does envisage a different political and social order that



comes into conflict with the project of Americanization or secularization of the world and as such one shouldn't expect too smooth a relationship between traditional Islamic and antitraditional (not only anti-Islamic but antitraditional) worlds to put it differently, between tradition (represented in its clearly formulated and living manner by Islamic tradition as other communities have largely succumbed to forces of secularization and liquidated their identities in the sense that large scale challenge to secular model is not presented by them) There are available interpretations that allow equal political rights of other religious communities Prophet didn't treat Christians and Jews and reinterpretations of them.

It is also to be noted that applying *Zakhirat ul Muluk* in its true spirit would require serious interrogation of the question of justice embodied in particular rulings, and we can't, so many centuries since his death, afford a legalistic reading. Now there is almost an agreement among scholars that the conventional or popular understanding of strict seclusion and purdah and what is perceived as mandating second-class citizenship for women is not the uncontested interpretation of sacred law.



One also needs to place in perspective Hamadāni's treatment by taking note of Farabi's treatment of the problem of forcing virtue that only superficially resembles Taliban moral policing. And let us also note that he is focusing primarily on wine and zina and music and silk. Let us note wine was banned, though unsuccessfully, by the US and, generally speaking, throughout the history of Islamic rule, a section of people from the ruling elite and, say, some poets, didn't find it difficult to get wine. About music, there is Ibn Khaldoon remarking that the decline of it is a sign of the decline of culture, and this is corroborated by scholars as diverse as Abul Kalam Azad and Luma al-Faruqi, besides a great legacy of Muslim personalities from Farabi to Khusraw to the number of Muslim music gharanas. There are scholarly traditional defences of certain forms of music from Moulana Jafar Phulwari and others. Thus, one can say that pushing for regulation of music is what the state will go for, but its blanket ban might be contested. One may remark that it would be an interesting question to see how Hubbi, a fellow Sufi, would fare in a State of Hamadani. Or a lot of stalwarts of Sufism, like Nizamuddin Awliya, holding a *mahfili sima* or a session of qawwalis today. Certain legal opinions are upheld on the basis of a particular setting in which they need to be promulgated and are revisited in another space and time.



One may note that any state has its own list of *munkaraat* or forbidden or disapproved practices and institutes various means for controlling them. One can easily show that there would hardly be any problem for a modern mind to appreciate the warrant or rationality of over 95% of the items in the list provided by Hamadani. Now with regard to the problematic points concerning women's rights, rights of non-Muslim communities and an aspect of the question of freedom for artistic pursuits, one may make the following points.

About *zina*, regarding which there is no debate whatsoever as to its unlawful status, there is a caveat worth noting that makes Hamadāni's position hardly different in principle from a modern state that proscribes any public display of it and persecutes people accused of it. Although there is no reconcilable pathway between Islamic and secular views of attitude towards sexual morality, when it comes to implementing a concrete agenda in a state, there are interesting points that lead to convergence, to a large degree, between Islamic and non-religious secular states. One may quote his own reference to Hazrat Ali's point that God has intended to keep secret one's witnessing of any secret individual breach of sexual morality (the point made in response to Hazrat Omar's question regarding his own witnessing of one such instance entitling him or not

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entitling him to go for *had*). The point is one needn't go for raids for moral policing.

Rulers, for Syed Ali Hamadani, are created by divine will to save the weak from the strong, institute justice, '*shafqatiriyaya*', which we might translate into “welfare state”, and do *ahsan*. He clearly distinguishes satanic kings from deputies of God. All this would imply that there is a warrant for both left- and right-inspired critiques of the status quo, and one needn't fall into the trap of binaries of secular vs religious nation states or see Hamadani leading us to Muslim nationalism that maintains a problematic relationship with non-Muslim states.

The challenge before the Muslim world is expressing the insights of traditional political thought that is religious by default in the contemporary idiom of political theory. The suggested reconstruction is to be done in the framework that treats traditional political thought apiece rather than in a contesting or exclusivist mode because both methodologically and empirically or historically, it is problematic.

Democracy, let us not forget, is an institution that fulfils part of the job vis-à-vis the institution of justice and suppression of satanic kingship, misuse of power that Syed Ali seeks. What means do we have for



preventing fascism or tyranny from rulers besides sermonising or appeals from such people as Syed Ali, and isn't it true that mostly power corrupts and counterchecks from democratic institutions are called for? Syed Ali calls to place himself in the shoes of the petitioner. He requires rulers not to have an Epicurean style and to be examples for people with regard to behaviour. Basic needs of subjects must be granted by him. Isn't this what modern secular political thought, especially the modern left, basically demands? Marx fundamentally said this thing – the rest is incidental or could be edited – that there must be equality, fraternity and brotherhood for all instead of certain classes or any ruling elite. Nothing expresses the Islamic and especially Sufi view of social justice, equality and fraternity better.

The clause Hamadāni adds that anyone who follows any opinion by any Mujtahid he trusts can't be prevented from following it, which makes for great flexibility when it comes to finding room for ordinarily “deviant” behaviour. Thus, if one follows some more liberal scholars on purdah, *sima*, etc., or parliament decides to follow it, one can circumvent the Taliban model quite easily, and Hamadāni, to be consistent, can't have a problem over this. One might also here refer to Ibn Arabi's view that allows following the easiest legal opinion available from countless Mujtahids on the

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ground that divine mercy warrants such ease, and he contests those legists who disapprove of seeking an easier fatwa as reflecting our love for self.

Before concluding, we may quote some maxims from his *Minhaj al-Aarifeen* that proclaim his key insights or his restatement of traditional Sufi sagely positions that can be universally appreciated and proposed as keys to eudaimonia/felicity/salvation.

دل را خالی کن تا راحت یابی

Empty your heart from greed and avarice so that you might get satisfaction.

در کار حق باش تا کار تو ساخته گردد

Involve yourself in the ways of God so that the things are made easy for you.

جز حق دوست نگیری تا خسته نگردی

Except God don't consider anyone as your friend so that you are not pained.

شکر حق بجائے آرا گر نعمت دین و دنیا می خواهی

If you want to be successful in both the worldly and religious affairs, always be thankful to God.



Some Misconceptions and Delusions Regarding Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Yaqub Muhammad Barahvi*

Translation: Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Syed Ali Hamadani Ibn Shahabuddin Hamadani is remembered by the people of the Indian subcontinent as Shāh-e-Hamadān, Muhsin-i-Kashmir and Hazrat Amir Kabir. Once I arrived in Tajikistan to visit the grave and shrine of Shāh-e-Hamadān, I came to know that the people of Kolab call him Hazrat Amir Jan. The Poet of the East, Allama Iqbal, remembered him with the titles of *Syed Al-Sadat* and *Salar-i-Ajam* in his poetry. During

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his short stay in the regions of Kashmir and Baltistan, Shāh-e-Hamadān enlightened the non-Muslims with the light of Islam, and that is why, irrespective of belonging to different schools of thought, all the Muslims living in this region seem to have immense devotion to Shāh-e-Hamadān, as they were socially, culturally, economically and politically empowered by him. Every morning in the mosques of Kashmir and Baltistan, the hymns of *Awradi Fathiyya* (composed by Shāh-e-Hamadān) can be heard almost everywhere on the loudspeakers. Whether it is a passer-by or any other living creature, every soul seems to have been moved by the hymns of *Awradi Fathiyya*. *Awradi Fathiyya* of Shāh-e-Hamadān has been popular in all parts of the Muslim world. In Turkey and its border areas, *Awradi Fathiyya* and *Awradi-Asriyyah* are still recited by a good number of followers of the *Kubrawiyya*, *Noorbakhshia* and *Naqshbandiya* Sufi orders. During my visit to Shah-e-Hamadan's shrine in Kolab, I came to know from the custodian of the shrine that for the last 20 years, he has been reciting *Awradi Fathiyya* regularly there. The Imam of Usman Mosque in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, who had come to visit the grave of Shah-e-Hamadan, told me that he belongs to the *Naqshbandiya* Sufi order and has been reciting *Awradi Fathiyya* and *Awradi-Asriyya* for the last 28 years regularly.



In the beginning of the 20th century, many delusions and misconceptions have been circulated about Shah-e-Hamadan Mir Syed Ali Hamadani for sectarian motives. Syed Qasim Shah Kharkoyi, a well-known person of Baltistan, distorting the historical facts, published a book '*Nurbakhshia*' from Nigina Press Jalandhar and attributed it to a Sufi sage. It is mentioned in this book that Shah-e-Hamadan first wrote his book *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, and later he annulled it himself by writing the treatise *Al Mowadat fi al-Qurba*, and he entered the *Noorbakhshiya* Order.

However, it is a well-established historical fact that Shah-e-Hamadan Syed Ali Hamadani died in Kunar in 786 AH, and Syed Muhammad Noorbakhsh was born in the city of Qain (Quhistan) 9 years after his death in 795 A.H. It took more or less 26 years for the newborn Syed Muhammad Noorbakhsh to attain spiritual maturity to be able to lay the foundation of the *Noorbakhshiya* order. So, how could it be possible for Shah-e-Hamadan to enter the *Noorbakhshiya* Order? Moreover, *Zakhirat ul Muluk* is considered the magnum opus of Shah-e-Hamadan, and it gave him popularity in all parts of the Muslim world. How it possible that Shah-e-Hamadan might declare this book invalid?



The distortions and delusions regarding Shah-e-Hamadan may be in the form of books or by fake declaration of oneself as the descendent of Shah-e-Hamadan. In all ages, there have been many attempts to distort his teachings. A person from Sargodha, Hussain Hamadani, by pretending to be the descendant of Shah-e-Hamadan, came to Baltistan in order to befool people. He quickly gained popularity through his magical tricks and anti-Sharia chants, and then he declared himself the promised Imam Mahdi. Before his death, his followers had become an exclusive sect. In Baltistan there are still some followers of this sect.

Similarly, the role of Sheikh Abu Yusuf Yaqub Hamadani was recently shown in the Turkish drama serial “Dirilis Ertugrul”, which is based on the history of the golden age of the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires; some people mistakenly ascribed this role to Shah-e-Hamadan. When the people heard the name 'Hamadani' in the serial, they directly attributed it to Mir Syed Ali Hamadani and began to popularise it on the social media. This notion is far from the truth and it has no basis in the authentic sources.

Dawaat-us-Sufiya

This book is a collection of invocations and remembrances and is very popular among the



Noorbakhshi adherents of Baltistan. People here consider this book authentic work of Shah-e-Hamadan, as almost every published version of the book mentions Shah-e-Hamadan as its author. Different manuscripts of Shāh-e-Hamadān's works are available in most of the leading libraries of the world. But *Dawat-us-Sufiya* does not exist anywhere outside Baltistan, and no researcher has included it in the list of works of Shah-e-Hamadan. About 80 manuscripts of this book are available in the Shāh-e-Hamadān Digital Library, but none of them are compatible with each other. Most of the manuscripts include some prohibited incantations and spells. The researchers agree that the original source of this book had been Risala 'Auradiya Amiriya' by Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. But over time, due to many distortions, it has now become a voluminous book, and it has lost its authenticity. The contents of this book are so ridiculous that on page 295 of this book, it is written that the earth is held up by a bull called *Yalhut* on its head, and when the bull gets tired, moves the earth from one horn to another, causing an earthquake. Many other ridiculous things mentioned in this book suggest that it cannot be a book by an author of the calibre of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Since I personally belong to a Baltistani Noorbakhshi family and follow the footsteps of Syed Mohammad Noorbakhsh, and it is my responsibility to highlight and

eradicate the fabrications and distortions associated with Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani.

Awrad-i-Fathiyya

We have so far acquired hundreds of manuscripts of *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* from different libraries around the world. Among them, many manuscripts are antique and rare, and gold water has also been used in the writing of some manuscripts. All these manuscripts are consistent with each other, but surprisingly the names of the caliphs have been removed from almost all the manuscripts found in Baltistan. In this regard, a friend of mine who passed away last year due to the corona virus, once in a discussion with me, talked about the absence of the names of the three caliphs in Baltistani handwritten manuscripts. To which I said that there is no solid evidence in support of these manuscripts, as they contradict manuscripts prevalent throughout the world. There are the most ancient manuscripts, and there is no incongruity found in them, while this difference in the Baltistani manuscripts is a question mark for us. The second thing is that the beliefs of the present-day Nurbakhshis about the three caliphs testify to the fact that the Baltistani manuscripts have been distorted. In response to this, my friend said that in *Awrad-i-Fathiyya*, while reading the names of the three



caliphs, the rhythm breaks at once, and this is enough evidence that the names of them have been added later on. I told him that he has only seen the way of reciting *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* by the people of Baltistan; if you hear how it is recited in other parts of the world, like in Kashmir, Turkey, Kurdistan, Tajikistan, etc., your doubts will vanish. I further told him that Shāh-e-Hamadān did not recommend any specific style for reciting it, and hence the assumption is groundless. Shāh-e-Hamadān Digital Library also has some manuscripts of *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* which include the names of 12 (Shia) Imams.

In fact, before the independence, the Baltistan region was under the rule of the Rajas,, who made it a practice to sow divisions in the worship and practices of their subjects and, as far as possible, to make arbitrary distortions in the books and started to plant in the minds of the people of Baltistan that they are the real heirs of Shāh-e-Hamadān and the books that are attributed to Shāh-e-Hamadān found in Baltistan are the only correct versions; the rest of them are distorted ones. Syed Ali Keresi is a well-known name for distorting the books in Baltistan and diverting the people from the teachings of Shāh-e-Hamadān. He writes in his book *Kashif-ul-Haq* that the Noorbakhshi beliefs and practices of Baltistan's Kreis, Bulghar, Naveem and Shagar areas were close to

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most of the Sunnis. The scholars here used to preach according to *Ihya ul Uloom al-Din*, *Kimiya e Saadat* and *Tafsir Hussaini Kashifi*.

Syed Ali Keresi further writes that [contrary to Shia fiqh] he saw Syed Muhammad Shah washing his feet while performing ablution. Ali Karesi informed his brother Syed Mukhtar about it and told him that this may have serious consequences as lot of people follow Syed Muhammad Shah. Karesi told him that the 'deviation' of Syed Muhammad Shah may deviate the Noorbakshis, as they consider him as their spiritual guide and mentor. At another place, Syed Ali Keresi writes that if the scholars had preached with wisdom and foresight, they would have succeeded in attracting the Noorbakshis to some extent. But they acted with narrow-mindedness and criticised their books. He further writes that he requests the scholars not to consider the Noorbakshis as outsiders but try to prove from their books that their *Mashaikh* had adopted '*taqiyyah*' throughout their lives.

Khulasat-ul-Manaqib

Although this book is not written by Shāh-e-Hamadān, but it has the status of being the oldest and the most authentic book on the life of Shāh-e-Hamadān. This book was compiled by his disciple Sheikh

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Nooruddin Jafar Badakhshi immediately after his demise. This book was first traced by a German researcher and was published in German language. After that, Dr Syeda Ashraf Zafar from Pakistan got her PhD degree by writing a thesis on the edited text of this book. We are highly grateful to Dr Syeda Ashraf Zafar for this effort, but at that time, most of the manuscripts available to her were distorted. For this reason, she completed her thesis by considering the distorted manuscripts as authentic ones. Later, Dr Syeda Ashraf Zafar translated the book into Urdu, and it was published by *Nadwiya Islamia Sofiya Noorbakhshiya*. The latest research has shown that her thesis has strengthened the distortionist elements. After that, the most authentic and standard work on this book was done by Dr Shamsuddin Ahmed of Srinagar. Shāh-e-There are many manuscripts of *Khulasat-ul-Manaqib* available in Shah e Hamadān Digital Library.

Risala al-Muwadat fi al-Qurba

Following one another, most of the writers have considered *Risala al-Muwadat fi al-Qurba* to be one of the books written by Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. According to an estimate, so far this book has been translated into Urdu seven times by different people in India and Pakistan. In reality, it seems that this book is the

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compilation of someone else who belonged to the Shite school of thought in jurisprudence. The name of the writer resembles with Shah e Hamadan, and his name is Syed Ali Hamadani Ibn Shahabuddin Alvi. This person is generally known in history as '*Siyah Posh*' (i.e., the one who wears black clothes), and he died in 830 AH and was buried in Hamadan in *Gumband-i-Alaviyan*, a great historical heritage of the Seljuk era. Due to the resemblance of name, *Risala al-Muwadat fi al-Qurba* was mistakenly considered by most of the writers to be the work of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Regarding the lineage of Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān, it is an accepted fact that he was *Najib al-Tarfeen Sayyid* (i.e., related to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from both paternal and maternal sides). Wherever he has considered it necessary to write his name, he has written it as 'Syed Ali Hamadani Ibn Shahabuddin'. On the contrary, in all the available manuscripts of *Risala al-Muwadat fi al-Qurba*, the author has written his name as 'Syed Ali Hamadani Ibn Shahabuddin Alavi'.

In the first book on the merits of Shāh-e-Hamadān, '*Khulat al-Manaqib*', it is mentioned that through his father, his family lineage goes all the way to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), and through his mother's side, his lineage reaches through 17 steps to the Prophet (ﷺ). The second oldest and most authentic book on his life,

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Manaqbat al-Jawahir, mentions his family lineage as follows:

Sayyid Ali Hamadani

Ibn Sayyid Shahabuddin

Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ali,

Ibn Sharaf,

Ibn Muhib,

Ibn Muhammad,

Ibn Jafar,

Ibn Abdullah,

Ibn Muhammad,

Ibn Ali,

Ibn Husain

Ibn Hasan

Ibn Jafar

Ibn Abdullah Zahid

Ibn Hussain Ibn Ali Zain al-Abidin

Ibn Hussain Shaheed

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Ibn Ali Al Murtadha

(May peace be upon all of them)

Risalah Fi Sawad Al-Lail Wa Libas Al-Aswad

This treatise also belongs to Syed Ali Hamadani Alavi, which is wrongly attributed to Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. In this treatise, the author has presented the virtues of wearing black clothes and has exalted the merits of black colour. Syed Ali Hamadani Alavi was fond of black clothes, and that is why he is known as '*Siyah Posh*' (i.e., the one who wears black clothes) in the books of history. Here too, due to the confusion of the name, Iranian research scholar Dr Mehdi Darakhshan has also called Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān '*Siyah Posh*' in his book, '*Buzurgan Wa Sukhan Sarayani Hamadan*'. Following him, many other Iranian writers have also mistakenly used the word '*Siyah Posh*' for Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān. A copy of *Risalah Fi Sawad Al-Lail Wa Libas Al-Aswad* is preserved in the Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent. Last year, Syed Zubair Hussain Shah Bukhari from Kahota, Pakistan, contacted me regarding the search for more manuscripts of this book for his Urdu translation, and later I came to know that he had passed away, and I don't know to whom he has attributed this book originally written by Syed Ali Hamadani Alavi.

Risalah Dar Marifat-i-Mazhab-i-Ahl-i-Tasawwuf

The original writer of this booklet is the famous Shia scholar of Iran, Bahauddin Amili, who is widely known as Sheikh Bahai. This booklet was published in Iran in his name by *Zahbiyyah*. But a librarian in Iran, in his description of the manuscript, declared Mir Syed Ali Hamadani as its author, which is an act of fraud or a mistake on his part. This manuscript was translated into Urdu and then published in Pakistan to prove that Shāh-e-Hamadān belonged to the Shiya Imamiya sect.

In this book, the author has first introduced eleven Sufi orders, and then in the end, all have been declared as the descendants of hell except *Imamiyah Athna-e-Ashariya*. If it is considered the work of Shāh-e-Hamadān, many unanswerable questions arise. For example, Shāh-e-Hamadān has praised Habib Ajami and other Sufi orders in other books, but this booklet includes them in the list of people who deserve hell. Can Shāh-e-Hamadān praise them and despise them at the same time? There are three manuscripts of this booklet available in the Shāh-e-Hamadān Digital Library.

Place of Death

Most of the chroniclers and writers have declared Mansehra city in the Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan

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to be Shāh-e-Hamadān's place of death, and that is the reason that now a beautiful pilgrimage site has been built at this place, where every year a huge number of devotees assemble to pay homage to Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. However, historical facts do not support this belief of the devotees. In reality, the actual place of his death is Kunar, and this historical place is still known by the same name despite the passage of many centuries. It is located in present-day Afghanistan, and it has also been confirmed by the Mughal emperor Zaheer-ud-Din Babur in his book Babur Nama. He writes,

“Mir Syed Ali Hamadani — God's mercy be on him! — was coming here as he journeyed and died 2 miles above Kunar. His disciples carried his body to Khatlan. A shrine was erected at the honoured place of his death, of which I made the circuit when I came and took Chaghan Sarai in 920 AH.”

Kunar being the place of death of Shāh-e-Hamadān is confirmed by Sheikh Qawamuddin Badakhshi in his letter as well. He was with Shāh-e-Hamadān at the time of his death. Only 9 days had passed since the coffin left for Khatlan, and he wrote this letter to Sheikh Nooruddin Jafar Badakhshi, the most beloved disciple of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Nooruddin Jafar Badakhshi was in

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his homeland, Badakhshan, who writes in *Khulasat Al-Manaqib* that after reading Qawamuddin's letter, he intended to leave for Kunar, but unfortunately Sheikh Muhammad, the king of Badakhshan, did not allow him to travel.

Dr Abdul Hameed, professor of archaeology at Hazara University, in his paper published probably in 2011 and titled as '*The Earliest Muslim Monument in the So-Called Tomb of Sayyid Ali Hamadani at Naukot: Hazara near Mansehra*' writes,

“We may deduce from the above discussion that the monumental enclosure at Naukot is not the actual burial place of Sayyid Shāh-e-Hamadān. On his way back to Afghanistan, Sayyid Ali Hamadani was welcomed warmly by Sultan Muhammad, the ruler of Pakhli, where he stayed for a few days. From here, Sultan Muhammad accompanied him. On the way, the saint fell ill and died at Kunar (in Afghanistan) in 786H/1385CE.”

Syed Alauddin or Ala-ud-Daula Simnani

Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani himself says that his father was a ruler in Hamadan and he was inclined towards the people in power, but for the education and training of his son, he was entrusted to his



uncle Syed Alauddin, who was one of the friends of Allah. It was the effect of his compassion, love and training that he memorised the Holy Qur'an at a young age. Most of the chroniclers and writers have got confused due to the resemblance of the names, as they consider Syed Alauddin and Ala-ud-Daula Simnani to be the same individuals, which is not the case. Shāh-e-Hamadān himself says,

“During my travels I met 1400 saints and received blessings from 400 of them in a single assembly. At the request of the king, the scholars and saints of Khorasan and Iraq had gathered there. My father and uncle were also present there. About 400 Sufis sat on the right side of the king, and other famous scholars sat on his left side. My father, holding my hand, asked them to pray for my well-being. All the scholars and Sufis present in the assembly prayed for me, and then my father made another supplication that all the scholars and Sufis may recite one hadith for his son. Among them, Sheikh Ala-ud-Daulah Simnani was the first to recite a hadith for me, and Khawaja Qutb-ud-Din Neshapuri was the last one. In this way, I compiled 400 sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that reached me with a sound chain of narrators.”

This incident of Shāh-e-Hamadān makes it clear that Syed Alauddin and Sheikh Ala-ud-Daula were two

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different personalities, and Shāh-e-Hamadān benefitted from both of them.

The second oldest book on the virtues of Shāh-e-Hamadān is *Manqbat ul Jawahar*, which is written by Shaykh Mulla Haidar Badakhshi. It was written about 60 to 70 years after the death of Shāh-e-Hamadān. Mulla Haidar Badakhshi writes about Shāh-e-Hamadān's meeting with Shaykh Ali Dosti that one day Shāh-e-Hamadān asked him why he is so kind to him at all times. To this, Shaykh Ali Dosti replied that once he was in the company of the great Sheikh Ala-ud-Daula Simnani, who told him, "When you see Syed Ali Hamadani, teach him '*zikr char zarb*' on my behalf." On being asked who Ali Hamadani is, he replied, 'I have been ordered by the Holy Prophet [in a dream] to leave something for his child before leaving [the world].' On being asked who his child is, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "My child is Sayyid Ali Hamadani; tell your disciples that as soon as they see him, they should deliver [my] spiritual cloak (*khirqā*) to him."

It is also clear from the above-mentioned incidents that Sheikh Ala-ud-Daula Simnani was not the uncle of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani.

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26. Architectural Features of Arian Resting Place during Seljuk Period (Persian) by Mehdi Motahari Tabar



The Role of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani in Shaping the Islamic Identity in Kashmir

Dr. Muhammad Shafi Bhat*

From times immemorial, Kashmir has been unique not only in its geographical beauty but also in its unique religio-spiritual ethos. Before the spread of Islam, Kashmir was dominated by followers of Hinduism and Buddhism. As for the advent of Islam in Kashmir, it is an historical fact which has been problematised both by mediaeval and modern historians of Kashmir that Islam was introduced in Kashmir long before the foundation of the Muslim Sultanate (1). Islam in Kashmir first got a momentum with the advent of Sufis with a missionary zeal from Central Asia, among such early Sufis including

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Shaikh Sharf-ud-Din Suhrwardi (famous in Kashmir as Bul Bul Shah, 1327 C.E) who was successful in influencing the Buddhist Sultan of Kashmir Rinchana (1320-1323 C.E), who accepted Islam and was renamed as Sultan Sadr-ud-Din and He was also successful in founding some early Mosques and hospices around the capital city of Kashmir, Sheikh Sharf-ud-Din was followed by other Sufis from Central Asia, like Saiyid Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari, Syed Taj-ud-Din, Syed Hussian Simnani (2), all of whom played constructive role in propagation of Islam in different parts of Kashmir. The year 1384 C.E. marks a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir, as it witnessed the arrival of a well-organised Islamic mission under the leadership of a great Sufi master, erudite scholar, and versatile writer Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani (famous in Kashmir with the titles of Shah-I-Hamadan and Ali Sani (3), who was accompanied by hundreds of his disciples and followers, a majority of whom were themselves great scholars in different branches of knowledge, art, and craft. (4) After Sayyid Ali Hamadani, this linkage and interaction with Central Asia and Iran saw rapid development, which played a pivotal role in the development of the Islamic culture of Kashmir. The mission started by Sayyid Ali Hamadani was taken forward by his disciples under the capable leadership of

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his illustrious son Mir Syed Muhammad Hamadani, who was himself a distinguished scholar, prolific writer and an experienced Kubrawi Sufi saint. Apart from these Central Asian Sufis, it was a local indigenous mystic order of Kashmir called the Rishis under the able leadership of Shaikh Nur-ud-Din, who was himself highly influenced by these Sufis of Central Asia, who tried to mould Kashmir's culture in Islamic form. The role of Sufis and Rishis on the religious and cultural facets of Kashmiri society had not just been during mediaeval times, but the influence can be traced down the history up to contemporary times. As the list of Sufis who came to Kashmir from Iran and Central Asia is very long, thus the present paper highlighted the role of the most celebrated and influential Kubrawi saints, especially the leader of the Caravan, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani.

Advent of Islam in Kashmir:

Before the spread of Islam in Kashmir, first Buddhism and later Hinduism were the dominant faiths in Kashmir. During Hindu rule, diverse dynasties ruled Kashmir. It was as early as the 8th century when the presence of some Muslims was traced by historians of Kashmir. 5. But as the crown and majority belonged to Hindus, therefore the socio-religious milieu was



dominated by Hinduism. Islam in Kashmir spread in a gradual process. Islam was introduced in Kashmir before the foundation of the Muslim sultanate in the 14th century. The religious history of Kashmir preceding Islam is nothing but a symbol of the integration of innovation, adaptation, compromise, reformation and, above all, a search for truth – the truth to be discovered by each generation. There was all along a section of intellectuals who were always in the process of becoming and never fully formed. It was largely because of these dynamic and changing actors that we see a dynamic and changing religious history. 6. Historians and scholars have deliberated extensively on the fast spread of Islam in Kashmir as compared with the other regions of the subcontinent; Kashmiri historians have counted two primary reasons as far as the Kashmiri society was concerned apart from the missionary efforts of the Muslim missionaries from Central Asia and Persia. First, the failure of the Hindu rulers of the last phase of the Hindu rule to defend the frontiers of the country and the honour and property of their subjects against the external invasions. Second, the replacement of a just social order of Islam, based on monotheism, in place of the Hindu socio-religious structure that had heavily weighed down upon the lower castes. (7) Scholars have even remarked that neither Hinduism nor



Buddhism were in a position to satisfy the socio-spiritual demands of the people, whereas the 'simple monotheistic' creed of Islam was much more appealing to them (8). The advent of Islam in Kashmir has had a great impact on the culture and civilisation of the region. Nonetheless, the promulgation of Islam in the region went through many challenges because of its divergence with the existing civilisations of Hinduism and Buddhism. The transition from Brahminic culture based on polytheism to Islamic culture and civilisation based on monotheism was gradual, according to the historians of Kashmir. As far as the conversions to Islam are concerned, 'Though these conversions from Brahmanism to Islam in Kashmir did primarily serve the purpose of the mediaeval state, it would be inaccurate to attribute it entirely to the state's initiative alone [9]11.' Thus, it is not the Sultans (kings), observes Mohibbul Hassan, but the Sufis who were mainly responsible for introducing and spreading Islam in Kashmir. But for this they did not use compulsion because they were neither capable of employing it nor did they have the sanction of the State behind them. 10. Their methods of preaching were based on persuasion, discussion, and open discourse. And they won over the hearts of the people on account of their simplicity, sincerity, piety, and devotion; therefore, it was primarily



the principles of tolerance, generosity, and humanitarian outlook of Sufis which motivated the local populace of Kashmir towards Islam. Concerned over the successful Sufi endeavours of the Islamisation of kings and common people, famous mediaeval historian Pandit Jonaraja writes in his *Rajatarangini*: “As the wind destroys the trees and the locusts the shali crop, so did the Yavanas destroy the usages of Kashmira.” This statement draws attention towards the subtle socio-cultural and religious changes characterising the Kashmiri society with the gradual spread of Islam during this period through Sufi intervention [12]. So, with regard to the advent and spread of Islam in Kashmir, all the historians and scholars of Kashmir are unanimous that it spread in a peaceful way and in a gradual process over the course of time, as the process was more based on persuasion with conviction rather than any kind of drastic revolution. Famous orientalist and historian T.W. Arnold has summarised it in a beautiful manner: “But all the evidence leads us to attribute it (the spread of Islam in Kashmir) as a whole to a long-continued missionary movement inaugurated and carried out mainly by faqirs and dervishes [13].



Role of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani in the Development of Islamic Culture in Kashmir:

In the fourth century a galaxy of Muslim Sufis came to Kashmir with missionary zeal to spread Islam in Kashmir. Among Muslim Sufis who came from Central Asia and Persia, the contribution of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani in the foundation and development of Islamic culture in Kashmir was paramount; for his unmatched contribution, he is popularly known in Kashmir as Bani-Musalmani (the founder of Islam in Kashmir). Prof. Ashraf Wani, in his momentous work *Islam in Kashmir*, aptly remarks about Syed Ali Hamadani,

The year 1384 marks a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir, as it witnessed the arrival of a well-organised Islamic mission under the leadership of a great Sufi master, an erudite scholar, a prolific and versatile writer and a widely travelled missionary, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, popularly known in Kashmir by various reverential titles as Amir-I Kabir, Shah-I Hamadan, Bani-e Islam, Bani-e Musalmani and Ali-e Thani.”¹⁴.

Sayyid Ali Hamadani was not only the first Muslim missionary saint who won the hearts of a large population of Kashmir to Islam, but he also laid a solid intellectual and organisational foundation of Islamic



culture and civilisation in Kashmir; he gave a new life and identity to the age-old mystic ethos of Kashmir. His footmarks are visible from statecraft to the aesthetic values of Kashmir. His message embellished hearts from the royal house to the common streets of Kashmir. His impact in the arts and crafts, nomenclature, religious seminaries, and spiritual hospices is rather in the overall culture and civilisation of Kashmir. About the missionary efforts of Syed Ali Hamadani, Prof. A.Q. Rafique remarks,

“There is no doubt, however, that Islam in Kashmir received great impetus because of Saiyid Ali and his followers. Saiyid Ali, accompanied by his disciples, travelled widely in the valley. He left his deputies at a number of places, which were great Hindu centres of those days, such as Pompur, Awantipora and Vijabrore. These followers of Saiyed Ali established Khanqahs, and the network of branches which gradually emerged became important centres of preaching and proselytisation.” 15.

The distinctive feature of Syed Ali Hamadani was his profound knowledge, his able leadership, his futuristic vision and his teamwork in the missionary pursuits. He was accompanied to Kashmir by revered Sufis, scholars and experts of different arts and crafts who, under the



guidance of Sayyid Ali Hamadani, trained the local Kashmiri populace in their respective fields of specialisation, whether it was arts and crafts or the religious and spiritual sciences. Therefore, his role was not merely confined to religious conversions, but his role and impact on Kashmir's culture and society were all-round, from polity to culture, although only the impact on religious and educational aspects is highlighted. Saiyid Ali Hamadani worked like a mason to build the fate of the Kashmiri nation; hence, he was keenly involved in the overall development of Kashmir. Great and magnanimous as he was, he gave Kashmir education, wisdom, culture and religion. He was a dignified mentor of this beautiful valley. The people of this "Little Iran" learnt arts and crafts through his guidance. About the role of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani in the development of different arts and crafts in Kashmir, G.M.D. Sufi aptly remarks in *Islamic Culture in Kashmir*:

"Sayyed Ali travelled widely throughout Kashmir preaching Islam, establishing the Kubrawi Sufi order wherever he went. Along with him from West and Central Asia had come some 700 of his disciples, whom he dispatched to various places in Kashmir to spread the faith and set up Sufi hospices and mosques. Besides preaching Islam, these disciples play a key role in



promoting various arts and crafts, for which Kashmir is famous and unrivalled today. Many of these disciples were skilled artisans and craftsmen, and they introduced into Kashmir such arts as had earlier been developed in Iran, such as shawl weaving, carpet-making, papier-mâché, calligraphy, silver and brass smithy and book-binding.” 16

He used Islamic esoteric values as a means of human reformation and development in Kashmir, as he saw Kashmir had a unique blend with spirituality. He transformed a caste-ridden society into a society where people learnt to live together with peace and harmony, worked together and prayed together in the same Khanqah. Fida Muhammad Khan Hassnain, in his book *Shāh-e-Hamadān of Kashmir*, writes that “He was a builder of a new nation, a master of the Dervishes, and the guide to the rulers; a teacher and a leader who brought a new civilisation, new knowledge, new industries and a new faith for the Kashmiris [17].” About Hamadani's multi-faceted role in Kashmir, F. M. Hassnain remarks, “It was his Sufi message of love, harmony, and brotherhood which made Islam popular among the Kashmiris. While giving the spiritual message, he did not ignore the material needs of his disciples. He imported about seven hundred craftsmen from Central Asia for introducing several handicrafts

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which were not known to the people.” 18

Kashmir has been illustrious for its arts and crafts throughout history. The arts and crafts prevalent in Kashmir from the very beginning of the Hamadani's arrival there are textiles of fleecy-soft texture, delicate embroidery work in silk and wool, handwoven carpets of the finest warp and woof, lovely paintings in wonderful designs on papier-mâché goods or on wood, fine trceries in wood carving, deft weaving in willow-wicker, and superb metalwork. Of the cottage industries, the most flourishing is that of wood-carving, which is not only beautiful but also of great utility, which finds its market throughout the world. Professor H. N. Rafiabab, in his book *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir*, writes that Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, by these fine and captivating industries, made Kashmir a minor Persia (*Iran-i-saghir*). Shawl Bafi is known in Kashmir as *Kar-i-Amir*, perhaps because of its relation with *Amir-i-Kabir*. It was not only the shawl industry that was revived by Hamadani's efforts, but he also made efforts to intensify other local and Iranian crafts in Kashmir. 19. Thus, apart from bringing new sciences, culture and values from Iran and Central Asia to Kashmir, Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani created a unique culture in Kashmir by promoting various arts and crafts of Iran. Mohib al-Hassan, in his book *Kashmir under Sultans*, writes that



“It is also stated that the shawl industry was founded by Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 1378 C.E. Because the shawl industry did not exist before the thirteenth century, for there is no reference to it either in Kalhanas Rajtarngni or any other source, and it was developed under the patronage of the sultans with the help of weavers who came from Persia and Turkistan.” 20

The multi-dimensional personality of Saiyid Ali Hamadani has had a long-lasting impact on the cultural, religious and social dimensions of Kashmiri society. His mission was carried forward by his disciples under the able leadership of his son Mir Muhammad Hamadani; therefore, it is very pertinent to know Mir Muhammad Hamadani's role in the development of Muslim culture in Kashmir.

Role of Mir Muhammad Hamadani:

Mir Muhammad Hamadani arrived in Kashmir at the young age of twenty-two. He was accompanied by about three hundred disciples. Kashmir at that time was ruled by Sultan Sikander (1389-1413). On his arrival in Kashmir, he was warmly received by Sultan Sikander and his administration in Kashmir. Both the Sultan and his nobles were greatly impressed by the mystical and intellectual qualities of Syed Muhammad Hamadani. 21. Just after his arrival in Kashmir, Mir Muhammad



Hamadani started his father's mission with the same methodology of his father that “the common people imitate the behaviour and culture of their rulers” [22], so he gave first preference to winning over the sultan, his nobles, and the peoples of the masses of the capital city, then with the passage of time, he visited all the corners of Kashmir and interacted with every section of society. The influence of Syed Muhammad Hamadani on Sultan Sikander and his nobles can easily be understood from the famous mediaeval chronicle Jonaraja's Rajatarangini in these words:

“...As is the moon among the stars, so was Muhammad [Mir Muhammad Hamadani] of Mirs country among the Yavanas [Muslims]. Although a boy, he was their leader because of his learning. The king [Sultan Sikander] waited on him daily, humble as a servant, and like a student, he daily took lessons from him [Mir Muhammad Hamadani].” 23

Just after his arrival in Kashmir, Mir Muhammad Hamadani adopted the methodology of his father, and the Islamisation of Kashmir became his prime focus during his stay in Kashmir. For this noble mission he not only created a network of Islamic institutions like madrasas, legal schools, fatwa organisations, mosques and khanqahs,²⁴ but also utilised the human resources



available to him (both his companions, who were themselves well versed in different sciences and arts, and the native mystics of Kashmir, namely Rishis²⁵) very perfectly, which resulted in a massive change and the profound development of Islamic culture in Kashmir. The famous institutions he founded in Kashmir not only represented the spiritual ethos during Sayyid's lineage during his time, but they also played a constructive role throughout Kashmir's history in the spiritual and social upliftment of Kashmiri Muslims down the line. Mir Muhammad Hamadani personally supervised the construction of the first and the famous Khanqah of Kashmir, called Khanqah-i-Muallah. The construction of Khanqah was started in 1396 C.E. (798 A.H.) at the place where the Shah-i-Hamadan used to pray and preach during his stay in Kashmir. Right from its foundation, the great Khanqah had represented the spiritual and cultural ethos of Kashmir's blend with Islam. The Khanqah was not built for being only a mere place of regular worship; the concept of building the Khanqah was far more ambitious. It was designed to serve as an institution with many functions: a sanctuary for pious and devoted individuals, a resting place for travellers, a charitable organisation for the needy and hungry, and a cultural centre for Islamic learning. A management structure headed by an appointed



administrator was put in place to oversee the implementation of the constitution of Khanqah based on Islamic principles of compassion, generosity and love for the creation of God. Pious and well-trained staff with specific individual operational responsibilities were appointed for the day-to-day running of the institution of Khanqah 26.

Conclusion:

Kashmir's blend with spiritual traditions has been from the very antiquity. The very spread of Islam in Kashmir flourished more through the efforts of Muslim missionary Sufis than Muslim conquerors or Muslim rulers. During the mediaeval times, with the advent of Islam and the foundation of the Muslim Sultanate, Kashmir not only went through developments in socio-economic fields, but it also went through an era of great religio-spiritual and cultural developments. These transformational developments came through the interactions with other rich cultures of the time. The main area whose own culture was also influenced by Islamic culture was that of Central Asia, which had a significant impact on Kashmir's socio-cultural and religious outlook both inwardly and outwardly. Though a great number of mystic personages apart from traders, merchants and craftspeople came to Kashmir and

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influenced the cultural and social milieu of Kashmir one way or the other, it was actually some great mystic personalities like Saiyed Ali Hamadani who influenced all the dimensions of Kashmiri society.

References and Notes

1. The first Muslim ruler of Kashmir was Sultan Sadr-ud-Din (before conversion to Islam Rinchana) who ruled for less than 4 years (1329-1323 C.E) and the Muslim Sultan was founded in 1340 by Sultan Shah Mir called Shah Mir dynasty which ruled for more than one century, but historians have mentioned presence of Muslims in Kashmir in 11th Century but after foundation of Muslim Sultanate there was a great flow of Central Asian Sufi missionaries who were warmly welcomed and respected by the Sultanates of Kashmir, for further study about advent of Islam in Kashmir see, Farooq Bukhari, Kashmir Mein Islam: Manzar Passi-i- Manzar, Ashraf Book Depot, Srinager, 2013, PP 1-30, Prof. Ashraf Wani, Islam in Kashmir, Oriental Publishing House, Srinager, 2004, Sayyid Ali, Tarikh-e-Kashmir, English translation with historical analysis History of Kashmir by A.Q. Rafique, Gulshan Books, Srinager 201



2. Syed Jalal-ud-Din visited Kashmir in 1347 C.E, Syed Taj-ud-Din Visited Kashmir in 1341 C.E and Syed Hussian Simnani came to Kashmir in 1371 C.E, For further study about advent of Islam in Kashmir before Muslim Sultanate, see Farooq Bukhari, ibid, Ashraf Wani, ibid, G.M.D. Sufi, Kashir: Being a history of Kashmir, Ali Mohd and sons, Srinager, 2008, Wali Muhammad, Tarikh-i-Awliya Jammu Kashmir, J&K Urdu Forum, Jammu,2013
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4. For further study about his Role see, Prof. Ishaq khan, Sufis of Kashmir, Gulshan Books, Srinager 2010, Ashraf Wani, ibid, DrAltaf HussainYatoo, Islamization of Kashmir, Gulshan Books, Srinager, 2012, Pir Hassan Quhami, Asrarul Abrar Urdu Translation, Tazkira-e –Awliya-e-Kashmir by Peerzada Abdul khaliqTahiri, Shiekh Usman And Sons, Srinager,2012, Khawaja Azam Didamari, Waqiat -e-Kashmir, Urdu Translation, Dr Suriya Gull, Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and Kubrawiyya Sufi Order in Kashmir, Wattan Publications, Srinagar, 2003
5. Ishaq Khan, ibid 61, he has quoted some historical evidences of presence of Muslims, “Varjrata, the son and successor of Raja Lalitadtiya (724-61) sold many men to mlecchas (Muslims), and introduced into the country practices which befitted the mlecchas”
6. Younus Rashid, Tradition and Dissent in Ancient Kashmir(A.D. 6th to 12th Century)(Phd Thesis in History) (Srinagar: University of Kashmir, 2014)P.106
7. Altaf Hussian Yatoo, The Islamisation of

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13. T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1995, p. 291
14. Ashraf Wani, Islam in Kashmir, pp. 58,59
15. A.Q. Rafique, p.46
16. G.M.D. Sufi, Islamic Culture in Kashmir, Light and Life publishers, New Delhi, 1979, p. 233



17. Fida Muhammad Hasnain, *Shah-i-Hamadan of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2009
18. Fida Muhammad Hasnain, *ibid*. p. 3.
19. H.N. Rafiabadi, *Islam and Sufism in Kashmir*, Sarup Books, Delhi, 2009, p. 31
20. G.M.D. Sufi, *ibid*, p. 263
21. Anonmous, *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, English translation by K. N. Pandit, <http://ikashmir.net/baharistan/index.html>, pp 52
22. Sayyid Ali Hamadani, *Dhakhirat-al-Mulukurdu* Translation by Prof. Shams-ud-Din Ahmad, Vol. 1, p 196, Ashraf Wani, *Ibid*, pp 60
23. Jonaraja, *Rajtarangini* via Altaf Yattoo, *Islamization of Kashmir*, pp 89
24. Khanqah is a Persian word meaning a holy place of worship for Muslims with a prayer hall for prayer (Salaat) and with residential quarters for guests, pilgrims and tourists. It is a building designed specifically for Sufi gatherings for spiritual retreat and character reformation, and often served as hospices for travellers and Islamic students.

25. The word Rishi is of Sanskrit origin, meaning a singer of hymns, an inspired poet or sage, The Rishi tradition in Kashmir has a long history, dating as far back to pre-Vedic times but it was after great efforts of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din who was influenced by Central Asian Mystics Sayid Ali Hamadani and his son Mir Muhammad Hamadani, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Islamized Rishi Tradition of Kashmir, For further study about History of Rishi tradition and its Islamization see RyshWa'ar: The Valley of Saints by Manzoor Fazili, Gulshan Books Srinager, 2015, pp 7-46, Ishaq khan, ibid pp 37-60, Mystic Traditions of Kashmir by Iqbal Ahmad, Gulshan Books Srinagar, 2011, Shiraza,, Sheikh-ul-Alam number, 1978, J&K Cultural academy Srinagar, vol.17, no.3

26. Farooq Bukhari, ibid 12-13, He has quoted the Waqaf-Nama of the Khanqah in which special guidance are given regarding maintenance and administration of Khanqah, it speaks about how the special care of not only devotees and disciples was taken into special consideration but also special arrangements for poor's, needy and travellers were made without any kind of discrimination.



Ethical Philosophy of Politics: A Study of Imām Al- Ghazālī and Mir Sayyid 'Alī Hamadāni

Dr. Mohd Iqbal Rather

Political Thought of Imām Al-Ghazālī

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Al-Ghazālī, was born at Ghazzālāh near Tūs in 450 A.H./1058 C.E. and died in 505 A.H./1111 C.E.¹ He is one of the greatest, distinguished and original philosophers not only in the history of Muslim philosophy but also in the history of human thought. The institutionalization of political philosophy and authority in Islam is by no way as simple as it gives impression at first glimpse. In the legalistic theory of Khilāfah elucidated and expounded by the jurists, the ultimate source of power and authority in Islam is Allah (ﷻ) and his Prophet Mu ammad (ﷺ). The divinely

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revealed law (i.e., Shari'ah) works as the command to do good and abstain from the evil.(2)

Al-Ghazālī was a Shāfa'ī jurist and his political ideas holds great significance in the 'Islamic Political Thought'. According to Ghazi, “at first sight it seems that there is no substantial post Al-Māwardī development in Ghazālī's political thought.

But a deep and thorough study reveals that Ghazālī's contribution to Muslim political thought is very substantial, original and utilitarian”.(3) It is generally perceived that Ghazālī's sphere was that of spirituality only and he had nothing to do with mundane affairs like that of politics, economics etc. However, Al-Ghazālī reached to such a prominence as an Islamic scholar with a wielding command over different branches of knowledge that he attained the title of *ujjat al-Islam* (proof of Islam).

As far as the political philosophy of Ghazālī is concerned, it is highly dominated by his ethical and religious precepts. He is of the view that “public interest requires obedience to the ruler who organizes military power”.(4) Politics is a necessary part of human life and is closely related to ethics, a science that leads to the good of man. Just like all the classical and medieval political thinkers of Islam Ghazālī also laid great

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emphasis and gave prime importance to the establishment of institution of

Khilāfah. Ghazālī mandates that there are three points which validate the need and importance of Khilāfah, and they are:

1) Khilāfah is the holder of state-power and authority that is inevitable for the maintenance of the law and order.

2) It is the outward reflection of the continuity of social and collective integrity of the Ummah.

3) It is the only lawful form of state and government in Islam, because it derives its authority from Shariyah.
(5)

Man as a social being cannot live all by himself. He is always in constant need and help of others. He needs this company for two reasons, firstly for the sake of procreation, and secondly that he might be helped in maintaining daily life. Co- habitation is necessary for procreation but it is naturally not possible for a man to confine himself solely to his wife and children. Ghazālī holds that the office of the Khilāfah should never be vacant. According to him, if a person possessing required qualifications for the office is not available another person of less competence would be preferred



to maintain the institution of Khilāfah. To him, Khilāfah is the basic source of all powers and authorities exercised by the Ummah. He is of the view that in the absence of the Khalīfah all the agreements reached with non-Muslims, judgements passed by various courts, contracts and legations stand illegal and invalid because all such authorities should be derived from the central institution of Khilāfah.(6)

However, Ghazālī highlighted that Allah (ﷻ) glorified two groups amongst the sons of Adam and blessed them with superiority over the rest: the one being the

Prophets and second the rulers. He sent Prophets in order to guide His bondsmen, and to safeguard the rights of people and to protect them from the rampage and ire he directed the rulers.⁷ politica is the central theme of Ghazālī's political thought. He is of the view that before taking to the office of Khilāfah, Khalīfah should be aware of his duties and status. Ghazālī enumerated certain conditions, which according to him are necessary requirements for the post of Khalīfah and these conditions include:

A) He should be consciously knowing all the secrets concealed in commissioning down man to earth;



B) He should be aware of his objectives in life, because it will decide his approach towards the welfare and the betterment of his subjects.

C) The ruler should realise that he has to leave this transitory world and this is not his permanent abode. Death is a culminating reality. The womb of the mother is his beginning and the grave his final resting place. In fact, a man's journey through life via his grave to eternity is like that of a traveller traversing a long arduous path through a bridge. Symbolically, in final reckoning he has also to cross the 'Pul-i Şirāt' (the Celestial Bridge of reckoning on the day of judgement).

D) He should undertake this journey to collect the finest 'Zad-i Rah' (once baggage in transit) and the goods of the finest good for hereafter. Even moment lost cannot be recaptured. He may not take the next breath.

E) He should do well to all, because what will stand by him are his good deeds achieved by shunning the evil and accumulating the truth. Or else, he will suffer miserably at the time of death and would not be able to face his creator on the day of judgement. The Īmān (complete faith in Allah ﷻ) is his principle tool whereby he can accomplish his objective. The pleasures of this world are transitory likewise the world itself. On the final day, the ruler would not be able to gain an iota of

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virtue from all the treasures of his kingdom.(8)

Ghazālī maintains that a Sultān or a ruler should be kind, generous and mild in his behaviour and attitude. He is of the opinion that if Sultān is conducive towards the vivification of the religion, people should not be impolite towards him, and they should show some courtesy to him.(9) In support of his argument, Ghazālī quotes Ḥadīth of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) which follows: السلطان ظل الله في أرضه

The Sultān is the shadow of Allah ﷻ on earth. (10)

Ghazālī while elaborating the Ḥadīth of prophet Mu ammad (ﷺ) argues that in

order to acquire the qualities of really being the shadow of Allah (ﷻ) on earth (Zill-u Allah) with all its implications, it is necessary that Sultān should deal with the subjects in a finest way and correct all his mistakes.(11) Ghazālī, while elucidating his political ideas maintained that the Sultān in reality is one who awards justice. He should not practice injustice and wickedness amongst his people. In his political thought, Ghazālī in detail has discussed the qualifications and conditions required for holding the institution of Khilāfah.

Qualities of the Khalīfah

Ghazālī while discussing the qualities of the Khalīfah lays great emphasis on the concept of justice ('Adl). Ghazālī in his "Counsel for Kings", quoted many verses from the Holy Qur'ān, traditions of the Prophet Mu ammad (ﷺ) and the narrations of the earlier kings in order to make the Khulafā' (rulers) of his times understand the significance of being just and on right path. Allah (ﷻ) says in the holy Qur'ān:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice) (Al-Qur'ān: 55:7)

In the explanation of this verse Ghazālī says, it means that, treat the sons of Adam (AS) (people) kindly and be just with them, as you would wish them to be just with you.(12) Furthermore, Ghazālī discusses tyranny and oppression as forms of injustice and categorized 'injustice' into two kinds. Defining its first kind, he says that it is the injustice done by Salāṭīn (pl. Sultān) to their subjects, strong to weak and rich to poor and another form is the injustice, which a person commits with his own self, namely the curse of sin. Therefore, he advises to avoid this injustice and argues that Allah (ﷻ) will keep injustice away from such a person. (13)

Political thought of Mir Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī

Mir Sayyid 'Alī Ibn Shihāb Al-Dīn Al-Hamadānī, popularly known as Shah-i- Hamadan, Amīr-i-Kabīr, Bānī-i Musalmānī dar Kashmir and 'Alī Thanī was born on 12th of Rajab 714 A.H./ 22nd of October 1314 C.E.,(14) in Hamadan. His Father Sayyid Shihāb Al-Dīn was a Ḥākīm (Government official) in the province of Hamadan and Fāṭimah a symbol of piety was his mother. In Khulāṣat Al-Manāqib, Ja'far Badakhshī (a disciple of Mir Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī), reports that according to Sayyid Ali Hamadānī, his lineage from both his parents is linked to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). From mother's side it reaches Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) after seventeen generations. (15)

He quotes the Stanza from the poetical verses of Hamadānī in reverence of his ancestry which translates as “Allah (ﷻ) has exalted my father and then my mother and I am the son of

these two pious souls. I am furnished silver out of gold and I am the son of

precious ones. Who among people has such an exalted ancestor or mother like mine? I am the son of two shining moons.” (16)

Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī visited third time Kashmir in

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785 A.H/1383 C.E. After a short stay, when he decided to leave Kashmir, Sulṭān Quṭb Al-Dīn requested him to permanently stay there, but Hamadānī overturned his request and left one of his disciples Maulānā Mu ammad Qārī (known as Mullā Mu ammad Qārī) in Kashmir. Owing to his deteriorated health, he left Kashmir and breathed his last at Pakhli on sixth of Dhu'l ijjah on his way back to Hamadan. Furthermore, it is to be said, that the coffin of Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī was carried from Pākhli to Khatlān¹⁷ and on the account of Didamari, he was buried at Khatlān on fifth of Jamād Al-Thānī 786 A.H.(18)

Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī never compromised on the matters of religion and was not worried about the displeasure of the rulers while cautioning them on their mere deviances from the religion. (19) On the concept of Islamic state, he mainly stresses on its essential aspects rather than engaging in the discussions on its appellations. The fifth chapter of the Dhakhīrat Al-Mulūk, which specifically deals with the political affairs of the state starts with the verse of the Qur'ān, which reads as:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِي ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ



Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition. (Al-Qur'ān: 16:90)

The interpretations of the aforementioned verse of the Qur'ān highlights the concern of Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī regarding the welfare of the people and his love for the Ummah of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī enumerates three principles of good governance; kindness, justice and benevolence. His political thought is highly dominated by the doctrine of justice ('Adl). Hamadānī highlights the importance of justice in the light of the Qur'ān and the traditions of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

The religious and ethical philosophies of Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī are closely related with his ideas of political philosophy. Social justice is the central idea of Hamadānī's ideas of state and governance.

Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, uniquely opines that a just ruler must be accompanied by a 'Sufi reformer' who would keep a check on the rulers. This is one of the distinguishing features of Hamadānī's political thought as compared to other political theorists of medieval period. He suggests that the Sufi reformer should assist the ruler to keep the society free from injustice and



rebellion and should always guide him in implementing the laws of Shari'ah. At the same time, Hamadānī lays stress on the economic autonomy of the 'Ulamā' so that they may not work under the influence of the ruler and dictate the laws according to the wishes and whims of the rulers. Z. U. Malik rejects this assertion of Hamadānī while suggesting that:

The union of sainthood and kingship is a difficult proposition to be comprehended or implemented as the attributes of the two institutions are diametrically opposed, and they have functioned for human betterment independently: political process derives its character and strength from power, prestige, and terror; while sainthood is founded on renunciation of earthly desires, piety, devotion and mystical practices which prepare a seeker of divine truth in this life for the life everlasting. (20)

Hamadānī following Ghazālī adapts Prophetic traditions and the examples from the lives of Khulafā'-i Rāshidūn to guide the rulers on religious lines for upholding justice and establishing peace. Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī while characterising the just and unjust rulers maintains that:

The ruler who follows the way of justice and Beneficence, strives for the establishment of divine law



(Shari'ah) and tries to implement the word of Allah (ﷻ) on the earth, is a vicegerent of Allah (ﷻ) on earth, the shadow of Allah (ﷻ) on earth and the deputy of His Majesty on earth. However, one who does not have a benign attitude towards his people and transgresses the limits of the Shari'ah, is really vicegerent of Dajjāl, enemy of Allah (ﷻ) and the Prophet (ﷺ) and Caliph of Devil.(21)

The titles used by Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, for both the just and unjust rulers are somehow different from other political theorists. In Hamadānī's political thought justice is the foundation of good governance. Hamadānī while devising a two-point formula i.e., 'following the Shari'ah' and the 'kind attitude towards the subjects', maintains that it is the base of good and balanced governance. Hamadānī while advising the rulers regarding their affiliations suggest that they should know their friends and foes. He proposes a ruler to seek the company of the righteous persons and pay attention to the words of an 'Ālim and differentiate between the 'Ulamā'-i-Ḥaq and 'Ulamā'-i Sū' (22)

Hamadānī urges a ruler to have a deputy who is prudent, wise and full of wisdom who can give valuable suggestions to the ruler in maintaining the affairs of the state.(23) Hamadānī explicates the temporal and



spiritual Khilāfah and adds that like a worldly state the human body is a 'mini state' run by a Khalīfah and has deputies and counsellors. Furthermore, for a better understanding of the affairs of the 'temporal state' (Salṭanat-i Ma'anwī), the modus operandi of the 'spiritual state' or the 'mini state' (Khilāfah Al-Insānī) needs to be comprehended. For that reason, he explains the metaphysical nature of the human body and calls it a little universe, explaining its operation at the subtle or the spiritual level. (24) Hamadānī elaborates this discussion and maintains that the Khulafā' and Salāṭīn as human beings can:

- 1) Either be beneficent or cheap skate towards both, his subjects or his own self;
- 2) Beneficent towards his own self and penurious towards his subjects;
- 3) Be penurious towards his own self and beneficent towards his subjects
- 4) Be beneficent towards both his own self and subjects

Hamadānī maintains that the best among the Salāṭīn and the Khulafā' is the one who is just to his own self and his citizens and degenerated is the one who is against this reality. (25) According to Hamadānī, these

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qualities are available in Anbiyā' (Prophets) and Awliyā' (friends of Allah ﷺ). (26) Unlike, other political thinkers of medieval period, Hamadānī does not ask the believers to follow a ruler who simply professes faith and enforces Islamic prayers. According to him, one who resists and stands against the tyrant and unjust rulers is in the way of Allah (ﷻ) and it is not obligatory to follow the ruler who forbids “Amr Bil Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'Ani'l Munkar” (enjoining good and forbidding evil). (27)

Hamadānī repeatedly warns the rulers to shun the path of tyranny and untoward behaviour towards their subjects and quotes the Ḥadīth of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ):

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī narrates that Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said, “On the day of resurrection, a tyrant ruler will be called. There will be no one to arbitrate him, without any explanation, no one will come to his rescue, and he will be thrown in the hell fire, which will be his final abode. (28)

The central theme of Hamadānī's political thought as mentioned is the execution of 'social justice'. Hamadānī repeatedly with the help of allegories and parables tries to counsel the Salā īn and the rulers to be just and benevolent in their actions towards their subjects. According to him, the worst man in the world

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is one who is assigned the job to administer the affairs of people and he dispenses his duties in an unjust way.

Hamadānī lived during a period when the gap between church and state was widening in West and religious authorities were being persecuted. It was the time when Europeans were deeply sunken in religious delusions. The new Europe was flourishing where authority of church was excluded in the benefit of ethnic and local prejudices. However, Muslims irrespective of their geographical and demographical diversities, considered Islamic world as their homeland and country in which they travelled anywhere and anytime. They were bonded through the divine word and love of Almighty Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

A Shaykh of Balkh and Tirmiz would be respected and venerated in Konya and Damascus and a Spaniard tourist would be considered a judge in India. Everywhere in mosque, school, abbey, monastery and hospital there was a symbol and remembrance of Muslims but there was not gender difference or nationality difference regarded as significant among Muslims.²⁹

Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī , accounts that whatever human beings obtain (whether it may be comfort, ease, relief, safety, salvation or mirth) is a sign of Allah's (ﷻ)

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mercy towards his creation. So, he always directs the rulers to take care of the rights of their subjects and those who are inferior to them in worldly status. 30

Duties of the Khalīfah

Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī formulates the guidelines for the rulers and the subjects to establish a just and balanced political system. In his *Dhakhīrat Al-Mulūk*, he lays down the principles for good governance whether it is temporal or spiritual. Hamadānī's primary concern is to establish a state where the ordained divine law is implemented in order to eliminate all the evils and vices from the society and instil piety in all the sections of society. He laid great emphasis on reformation of the moral values of man (*Ḥusn-i Khuluq*). Hamadānī does not discuss separately the qualifications required for the post of Khalīfah like Al-Fārābī, Al-Māwardī and Ibn Khaldūn. However, the qualifications devised by Hamadānī can be deduced from the duties he assigns to a ruler towards his subjects both Muslims and non-Muslims (*Ahl al-Dhimma*). He develops these entire criterion within the mandates of Shari'ah. Hamadānī advocates for the establishment of system where everyone's due share and equal opportunity is guaranteed. He strives for the establishment of a system back on the lines of Prophetic model and his



companions strived for. He bets to establish the institution where everyone is equal before law, justice is the prime concern, to help poor and needy is given due importance and establishment of the Shari'ah is given the foremost priority. Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, sets ten conditions for the kingship or Salṭanat, which are imperative for the ruler to follow:

1. In the process of decision making the ruler should consider himself as one of the governed and pass his verdicts in a way as he as a subject would expect from a benevolent king. He should treat the Muslims in a way he would like to be treated as a Muslim.

2. He should gratify the needs of Muslims and consider it as worthiest of all the devotions. In support of his argument, Hamadānī quotes the Prophetic tradition that, “appeasing the heart of a Muslim is equal to the abidance of all the Jinns and humans on the earth and this is the precondition for all the rulers to satisfy the needs of all the destitute and needy”.³¹

3. While eating, the ruler should follow the habits of rightly guided caliphs (Khulafā'-i Rāshidūn). He should abstain from lavishness and wearing elegant robes.

4. The ruler ought to be very gentle and polite while directing his subjects and should not be annoyed with

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lengthy discussions and arguments. He should not feel humiliated while talking to underprivileged class.

5. He should not delay or hesitate in taking decisions in order to please the people and must always act according to the codes of Shari'ah, however unpleasant it may appear to the people. It is not possible for a just ruler to please all his subjects while taking any decision. So, he should take all the decisions only to please Allah (ﷻ) and for His pleasure without worrying about any sort of rebellion in his state.

6. He should be aware of the possible dangers involved in the leadership of the state. He should hear such sufferings patiently. This would earn him reward in the life hereafter. He should understand that kingship is the means that can earn him both felicity and dishonour in this world and Hereafter. He should not make the comfort and luxuries of this world as a means for discomfort in next world.

7. He should seek the company of pious and the learned people, observe their guidance, and follow their advice. He should keep himself aloof from the ignorant, greedy 'Ulamā and Mashā'ikh or paupers who praise and pray for every unjust, cruel and niggard.

8. Out of arrogance, he should not create fear and fright among the people. He should follow love,



sympathy and kindness while dealing with his subjects especially the underprivileged section of the society. This will endear him to his people.

9. The ruler should always be vigilant and must be aware of the dealings of his officers/ministers with the people. They should neither be unjust and nor oppress or intimidate the people and if any of his officers found guilty the ruler should give him an exemplary punishment, so as to put a check on the repetition of such an activity by any other official. He should never plot with the guilty and should reprimand the nobles with wisdom and good advice.

10. The ruler should be wise and erudite. It is imperative on him to check each and everything carefully while deciding any case. He should try to discover the truth of every case and address the case with discernment and sagacity and in accordance with the dictates of the Shari'ah. They should not be simply led away by the statement of the witness. They should not forget the fact that there are innumerable causes for every happening, and that what often appears superficially has no bearing upon reality. (32)

Elaborating the duties of the Sultān, Hamadānī, reiterates that he should be prudent and well balanced in every matter related to the state affairs. He should be

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loving, kind to his subjects and should not unnecessarily reprove them. Hamadānī makes it imperative for the Sultān or the king to strive for the implementation of the Sharī'ah and decide every case with utmost care and insight.

Rights of the Muslims Subjects

By the time Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī wrote *Dhakhīrat Al-Mulūk*, medieval Islamic world had produced a lot of literature related to nature, form and functions of the state. This literature, as an elaborate discussion on all the key issues of the state and government had a significant impact on the mind-set of the people. For this reason, Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī avoided to repeat the already discussed themes pertaining to Islamic politics and tried to fill the void in this plethora of literature on medieval Islamic political thought. Thus, he mainly emphasised on the duties of Khalīfah and rights of the subjects which seemed to him as the most important and serious issue to be addressed from application point of view. While discussing the rights of the citizens, Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī has classified them into two categories, 'rights of Muslims' and 'rights of non-Muslims (Ahl al-Dhimma)' in an Islamic state. Hamadānī formulated twenty rights for Muslim subjects in an Islamic state which follows as:



1) The ruler should behave humbly and compassionately with all his subjects especially Muslims. Out of proud and arrogance he should not consider himself superior to other Muslims. He should keep it in mind that Allah (ﷻ) dislikes arrogant and unjust people. Hamadānī quotes the Ḥadīth of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), “the person will not enter paradise that has arrogance [in his heart even] equivalent to a seed of sesame.” (33)

2) He should not listen to the gossipmongers; this will lead him astray, resulting in mischief and remorse. Hamadānī suggests that those who highlight others failure and shortcomings in front of a person will definitely highlight his (shortcomings) in front of others.

3) If a Muslim commits any mistake, the ruler should forgive him within three days, if the mistake is not of serious nature. However, if he has done a serious blunder which displays an utter disobedience of Sharī'ah in any way, the king can dissolve him and banish him from his favour for the rest of the life.

4) The king should be benevolent, loving and kind to his subjects. He should be unbiased while dispensing justice. The Sultān is the shadow of Allah (ﷻ) (il-u Allah) on earth as Allah (ﷻ) does not make any discrimination and showers His mercy on both

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believers and non-believers, likewise the ruler should be impartial.

5) The king should respect women and treat them sympathetically. He should never, in pride of his power, eye women and pry into the private residences without proper permission.

6) While dealing with the people, the ruler should interact with everyone according to his status. He should in no way expect a refined behaviour from inferior and mean people and should not expect intellectual maturity and eloquence from Bedouins. He should assign duties to people according to their capacities. He should be aware of the fact that each group of people is bound to behave in accordance with its own culture. The court should be open to everyone to meet the ruler and the ruler should in no way be irritated by this.

7) The ruler should respect senior citizens especially the righteous and should be kind towards children. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) has said, “He is not amongst us who did not respect our elders and love our children.” (34)

8) The ruler should fulfil and execute all the promises made to subjects and should consider it unworthy going against his promises.



9) The ruler should be kind and benevolent towards everyone. He should not use disrespectful words. He should treat the underprivileged people with kindness and generosity.

10) The ruler should be just and fair while exercising his authority. As he expects his people to be fair and just with him, he should in turn be fair with them. He should behave with Muslims in a way as he expects them to behave with him.

11) The ruler should consider it as his foremost duty to make reconciliation between two Muslims. He should not make any deferment in resolving the disputes among Muslims as it would otherwise lead to strife and feud with severe consequences.

12) The ruler should not expose the faults of a Muslim rather should conceal them. He should not oppress the poor people on petty offences and should try to forgive the mistakes of the people.

13) The ruler should not encourage his subjects for evil. If accidentally the ruler commits any sin he should conceal it, because the subjects are quite often following their rulers and if a ruler is virtuous then subjects are encouraged to good and its reward will be reaped by the state. If the king is wicked and corrupt then it is obvious

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that his subjects will follow the same and, in this case, the state will have to face its severe consequences.

14) The rulers should solve the problems of the people. If his recommendations/suggestions are needed in any genuine case, he, without any delay, should recommend it whenever and wherever needed. In states, important tasks are carried out on the recommendations of the rulers, he should use this opportunity to bring genuine persons upfront and seize this opportunity to obtain eternal bliss.

15) The rulers should prefer the poor to the wealthy and affluent people. He should prefer the companionship of the pious, Godly persons and at least once in a day should listen to the counselling and admonishments of the righteous ones. Their association will enlighten his heart and purge it from the darkness, which is otherwise a danger to the faith and causes damnation and everlasting disappointment. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said that, when Ḥaḍrat Sulāimān (AS) used to come out of his throne he would directly approach mosque in search of any poor and needy and sit by him saying that a meek is sitting by a meek. (35)

16) The ruler should be aware of the conditions of every section of the society particularly the downtrodden, distressed, orphans and hungry.



Addressing their issues, he should make sure none is left hungry and everyone is provided with basic facilities of life. He should be concerned and fearful of the day of judgement where kingship will be of his no use and the rightful claimants whose affairs were entrusted to him will be asking for their dues from him. Therefore, he should deliver his assigned service to mankind particularly his Muslim subjects with utmost solemnity, care and caution.

17) The king should keep the highways safe for his subjects from robbers and the thieves. A king should be stern in awarding exemplary punishment to the robbers, so that the passage is safe for the public use. He should renovate all the ruined roads and construct watchtowers for the safety of the by passers and if not possible then should keep the dread roads under surveillance.

18) The king should focus on rehabilitation and constructive programs like constructing bridges and inns for the convenience of the people.

19) The king should construct Masājīd (sing., Masjid or mosque) in Muslim localities and appoint Imām and Mu'azzin (one who calls for prayers) with regular stipends to fulfil their financial requirements. As such, they can perform their duties with full dedication.



20) The king should facilitate the act of enjoining good/lawful and prohibiting evil/unlawful (Amr bil Ma'rūf wa Nahy 'Ani'l Munkar). He should consider himself obliged for the execution of this important command of Almighty Allah.

While framing and dictating the set of rights regarding Muslim subjects, it seems that Hamadānī's approach is that of an 'Ālim/religious scholar and a reformer than a political theorist. He advises both the rulers and the subjects to follow Sharī'ah in letter and spirit. Hamadānī holds that these rights are for the Muslims subjects. For Non-Muslim subjects (Ahl Al-Dhimma) there are different rules which Ḥaḍrat Umar has set up for the fire worshipers (Zoroastrians) and the people of the book (Ahl Al-Kitāb) after the conquest of Iran and Jerusalem.(36) Hamadānī had made it imperative for the Salāṭīn to follow the covenant of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar dealing with the Non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state.(37)

Rights of the Non-Muslim Subjects (Ahl Al-Dhimma)

The discussion on the rights of Non-Muslims (Ahl Al-Dhimma) in an Islamic state makes it imperative to understand that Islamic state is an “ideological state”.(38) A nation state and an ideological state are



poles apart from each other. The word Dhimmah means the 'guaranteed', 'protected' and refers to the people (excluding Muslims) living in an Islamic state and are guaranteed the rights of being human and the security to their life and property.

Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, maintains that the covenant adopted by Ḥaḍrat Umar (RA) should be followed while dealing with Ahl Al-Dhimmah. However, this sphere of his political philosophy has faced severe criticism for being discriminatory but this covenant should be viewed in historical context. Prof. Ishaq Khan writes in this regard,

"There is no concrete evidence in the sources to show that the Sayyid ever stood for imposing "discriminatory conditions" on the Kashmiri Sultan's non-Muslim subjects, who were undoubtedly in an overwhelming majority on the eve of his advent in the Valley. Added to this is the fact that the Sayyid notwithstanding his adherence to the Sh'afi school, showed broadmindedness in allowing a band of local converts and Muslim settlers in Kashmir to follow the Hanafi law. Sayyid Ali's decision seems to have been guided by expediency, since the Hanafi law, as compared to the other three schools of Islamic jurisprudence, is less rigid in regard to the treatment to be meted out to

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non-Muslims by a Muslim ruler... "There is no concrete evidence in the sources to show that the Sayyid ever stood for imposing "discriminatory conditions" on the Kashmiri Sultan's non-Muslim subjects, who were undoubtedly in an overwhelming majority on the eve of his advent in the Valley.

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The Political Perspective of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani With Special Reference to Zakhirat-ul-Muluk

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

When Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni visited Kashmir for the first time with a missionary zeal, the circumstances were turbulent and challenging for him. Half a century had passed since the lamp of Islam was lit here, but the darkness of ignorance and polytheism was still there. The un-Islamic practices were prominent in the society. The king was fond of un-Islamic customs and pagan habits, and there was unrest and injustice all around. Shāh-e-Hamadān, with his political insight and understanding of the situation, completely changed the scenario and institutionalised Islam in Kashmir in its real spirit. He not only planned to put the people on the right path but also persuaded the ruling class to establish



just laws. Like a typical Sufi, Shāh-e-Hamadān had no hunger for power, but he had a full realisation of his key role in the reformation of the Kashmiri society. Though he had no interest in involving himself in the corridors of power, he fully discerned the decisive role that the ruling class may perform in putting things in order. He himself was the head of a politically influential family, and his father held an important political position, but he renounced political power and royal luxury and involved himself in the gnosis of God. The biggest disadvantage of people of character and justice not taking an interest in political affairs is that an incompetent and tyrannical ruler is imposed on the nation, who misuses his authority and creates an atmosphere of unrest and chaos, the destructive effects of which no one can escape. According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, there are two basic principles of religion:

1. *Al-Ta'zim li'Amr Allah...*i.e., respecting and obeying the commands of God
2. *Al-Shafqat 'ala Khalq Allah...* i.e., adoring and serving God's creation

Shāh-e-Hamadān follows these precepts in politics as well. According to him, in politics and governance, a ruler should neither disobey the commandments of the Lord nor do injustice to the people.



According to traditions, during his reign, when Amir Timur created an atmosphere of injustice and disorder, he started persecuting the Sayyids. In these circumstances, if Shāh-e-Hamadān wanted, he could have launched a resistance movement against him, but he took a far-sighted decision to migrate and turned to Kashmir with a positive mindset, where he achieved great success.

The overall political thought of Shāh-e-Hamadān can be summarised in these eight points:

1. The different classes of society are interdependent, and a nation can only progress when each class fulfils its responsibilities well. No class is superior to the other, and a ruler should establish unity and fraternity to strengthen his empire.

2. The goal of a Muslim state should be following the decree of God.

3. The sovereignty belongs only to Allah Almighty, and man has been sent into this world as vicegerent. The necessary consequence of recognising the Divine Sovereignty is that the government should fully adhere to the injunctions of the Sharia.

4. Among the basic responsibilities of the government is to institutionalise 'Amr bil maruf' and

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'Nahi an'il munkar', i.e., enjoining good conduct and forbidding indecency.

5. The government has the responsibility to ensure justice and equality.

6. It is essential to follow the Islamic code of conduct in politics. A government without moral and ethical bindings cannot be justified.

7. Shāh-e-Hamadān considers the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs as ideals in governance and considers their decisions as a beacon of light.

8. In Shāh-e-Hamadān's view, a stable economy is essential for a successful government, so it is the duty of a government to facilitate economic activities.

Zakhirat ul Muluk (Treasures of Kings) is one of the most significant works of Shāh-e-Hamadān. As the name suggests, this book has been written for the benefit of the ruling class. However, the ethical and moral guidelines that have been put in this book are highly beneficial for all kinds of people. *Zakhirat ul Muluk* is mainly based on the works of Imam Ghazali. It has a preface and ten chapters. Every chapter deals with moral virtues and etiquette. The main themes touched on in the book are the testimony of faith, the Divine Oneness of God, loyalty and sincerity to God, moral excellence,



the rights of parents, children, and family members, the duties of rulers, the rights of citizens, the upliftment of justice, man as the caliph of God on earth and his duties, enjoining right conduct and forbidding indecency, the importance of patience in adverse times, the disapproval of arrogance and anger, etc. According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, God behaves towards humans with His mercy, and “everything in order from ease, comfort, success, joy, relief, leisure, safety, salvation, pleasance, and mirth that happens to people is the result of His mercy.” Thus, in every political system, the main principle that needs to be followed is the precept of divine mercy. The ruler should govern the people with mercy, and people should also treat one another with mercy. Another important guiding principle is treating people with tolerance. God tolerates all kinds of people in His kingdom, and the same attitude should get reflected in the ruler, as with limitations, he represents God on the earth. Shāh-e-Hamadān says, “Fear the Almighty God over the rights of those inferior who are your wealth and slaves ... In fact, the Almighty God has made them your wealth, and if God wants, He can make you their slave and wealth, as God can do whatever He wants...”

A king must live like poor and weak people: "It is true that the Almighty God ordered kings in Islam's



territories to live, eat and wear like the poorest and weakest so that the wealthy people would follow them in this tradition and help the poor and the weak, and in this way the poor would not be unhappy and sad due to their poverty."

According to Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, the qualifications of kingdom and reign depend on ten conditions. "The first condition is that when an event happens, the governor and king should consider themselves as one of the people (like one of their inferiors) and imagine that another person is the governor, and in that situation whatever they do not approve and admit from the governor, they themselves should not order their inferiors, and whatever they dislike and do not choose for themselves should dislike and not choose for other Muslims ...: the second condition is that they should consider fulfilling the needs of Muslims as the most transcendent worship ...; the third condition is that ... they should not get accustomed to eating pleasurable and yummy foods and wearing soft and luxurious clothes.... the fourth condition is that they should reign and decree using their forbearance and should not be irritated and become angry without any reason, and should not become tired when they listen to long complaints of people, and should not be ashamed of speaking with



poor and weak people...;the fifth condition is that they should not laze and should tolerate so that they can obtain people's satisfaction, and should not oppose to right and religion' to obtain anyone's satisfaction, and should know that it is the nature of government that always half of the people would not be satisfied with one's government since one cannot satisfy the two sides imposing their right.. The sixth condition is that ... they should be certain that the position of government and seigniory is a tool by which one can both obtain salvation and dignity of Doomsday, as well as permanent misery, infamy, and captivity of Doomsday...; the seventh condition is that one should be interested in pilgrimage and companionship with the righteous and religious scholars, although these kinds of people are rare and dear in these times and especially in this land. The eighth condition is that they should not make people frightened with their cruelty and arrogance, but they should make themselves beloved of the poor and the inferiors via justice, mercy, kindness and affection ... The ninth condition is that they should research the betrayal of the nawabs and injustice of their agents and should not empower the wolf characters over poor and weak people, and the tenth condition is intelligence...”

A look at the Zakhirat ul Muluk shows that Shāh-e-Hamadān was an ardent advocate of the Islamic system



of governance, which derives guidance from the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). According to him, the Islamic value system would ensure justice, equality, liberty and fraternity for all the citizens. He sees himself as an advisor to the kings rather than a political leader and is seen fulfilling his social responsibilities. When he came to Kashmir, he could have stayed in the royal palace, as the ruler at that time was his admirer, but he preferred to stay in an inn. In fact, he maintained a safe distance from the ruling class. If he had chosen to live under the royal favour, he could not direct them to mend their ways. Shāh-e-Hamadān appreciated the good deeds of the ruler, but when he found him on a wrong track, he would severely criticise him. Sultan Qutbuddin was his staunch devotee, but when Shāh-e-Hamadān came to know about his un-Islamic practices, like marrying two sisters simultaneously, he directed him to divorce one of them to save himself from the wrath of God. The ruler respected his command and resolved to reform himself. Those days, the Mongol invasions had broken the backs of the Muslim empires. The Muslim rulers had lost all hope, but Shāh-e-Hamadān asked them to revive their faith in Allah. He advised them to come out of despair and to follow the Quran and Sunnah to get success. He wrote a good number of letters to different rulers of his



time, advising them to take the right decisions and to show commitment to the Shariyah.

In fact, *Zakhirat ul Muluk* was written at the request of the rulers of the time seeking guidance from an enlightened Sufi saint of their time. In the fifth chapter of the book, Shāh-e-Hamadān has expressed his views on government and empire in detail. It is obvious that Hazrat Shāh-e-Hamadān wanted to establish a divine government based on Islamic principles and on the model of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. According to him, Islam cannot be kept aside as far as governance is concerned. Without religion, a society goes into anarchy and corruption.

Shāh-e-Hamadān engaged himself in educating the rulers and the subjects alike, and it was the fruit of his hard work that very soon such rulers emerged in Kashmir who did remarkable work for the propagation of Islam and the stability of the nation. His political insight can be gauged from the fact that a political dispute arose between the king of Kashmir, Qutb-ud-Din, and Firuz Tughlaq, as a result of which the situation could have reached such a point that the country of Kashmir would have been attacked, but Shāh-e-Hamadān, with his political insight and realistic strategy, intervened at the right time, resolving the

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matter without any bloodshed. Shāh-e-Hamadān's attitude towards the non-Muslims was accommodative and forbearing. Some words taken out of context have been circulated to malign his image, but his generous and tolerant attitude is clearly evident from his life and teachings.

In Zakhirat ul Muluk, while advising Muslim rulers to be just and fair to non-Muslims, he writes:

"The justice and fairness of the ruler should be for all his subjects, and in this matter, he should not make any difference between the eligible and the ineligible for kindness because the king is the shadow of God, and the mercy of God includes every infidel and believer. In the same way, the kindness of the ruler should be related to every good and bad person."

An analysis of Shāh-e-Hamadān's religious, social and philosophical views suggests that he maintained a moderate and balanced approach in all the fields of life. In the political matters, he has adopted the approach of "Love Towards All, Malice Towards None". Shāh-e-Hamadān understood both the outer and inner aspects of Islam very well and guided the people according to their requirements.

Dr Ishaq Khan writes in his book,



"The letters of Syed Ali Hamadāni to the Sultan of Kashmir, Qutbuddin, reveal many things. These letters are a reflection of his impartial attitude towards the non-Muslims of Kashmir. If he had not looked upon the 'friendly' attitude of the king towards the non-Muslims with favour, he would have expressed his displeasure, disappointment and disgust in the letters that he sent to the Sultan of Kashmir from Pakhli after his departure from Kashmir. On the contrary, it seems that Syed Ali was aware of the complexities of his historical mission in Kashmir, and this explains why he advised the Sultan of Kashmir to try to popularise the Islamic Shariya within the possible limits. Despite his pro-Shariyah standpoint, neither his letters nor 'Zakhirat-ul-Muluk' gives even the slightest hint that he wished for the king to treat the overwhelming majority of his non-Muslim subjects with hostility. According to him, "All subjects are God's creation, so it is the religious duty of the king to protect the rights of the weak against the powerful."

This makes it clear that Shāh-e-Hamadān's worldview was not like the extremist Islamists of today, but he was an intelligent and sensitive leader who understood the complexities of the situation and understood the difficulties of implementing Islam in totality. He was well aware of the principle of *tadrij* (gradual reformation) and remained positive



throughout his life. The views of Shāh-e-Hamadān regarding governance have been beautifully summarised in Zakhirat ul Muluk in these words:

“O dear! You may have come to know from what I have said as to how the prophets and the first four caliphs led their lives during their rule, and how hard they were upon themselves despite their authority and kingship and their possessions of treasure houses, and how they bore life's ordeals and yet lived on. And they were ever struggling to administer justice among their people. and to treat them with kindness and love. Yet, they were not secure against the hazards of rulership. Therefore, know this: presiding over the believers is a great, stupendous task, and taking over governance is a serious matter. And if the ruler follows the path of justice and kindness and endeavours to establish the parameters of the shariyah and carries into effect religious regulations, he is then, upon earth, God's deputy, His chosen man and his shadow. But if he renounces his pattern of kindness and justice and does not show affection to God's followers and becomes a slave to himself and its desires and neglects his duty of establishing the shariyah, he is then the vicegerent of the Antichrist, the enemy of God and his Prophet (peace be upon him) and a deputy of Satan. Only he wins the race in the field of eternal bliss who acquits himself of his



kingly duties with justice and reflection and who knows where he has come from, where he has to go, and what his life purpose is. Therefore, the Scripture and the Sunnah should make it clear to him that whoever is in this world is but a traveller, and the stages of his travel are limited.”

An analysis of Shāh-e-Hamadān's works in general and Zakhirat ul Muluk in particular shows that he allowed himself moderate freedom of thought yet within the framework of the Shariyah. His position is that of a rational jurist and moralist who well understood Islam being both spiritual and worldly. Shāh-e-Hamadān advocates for the need to strengthen a Muslim state, which was possible only through integration. Considering the relationship between religion and state, spiritual and secular, he asserted their continuity and interdependence. The ummah, uniting people on the basis of faith, aims to achieve happiness in the other world. Given that God is the only sovereign, a person is obliged to strictly follow Sharia. Politics, fiqh, and ethics as inextricably interconnected sciences indicate and determine the ways to achieve happiness. In the end, “Political reforms are moral reforms: one who wants to improve the lives of the others must start with himself.”

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Shāh-e-Hamadān on Good Governance

Dr Muhammad Tanveer Hayat*

1384 AD is considered a historical year for Kashmir because in this year the great Sufi Saint, religious scholar, creative and multitalented writer, missionary and voyager for the cause of Islam, Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni (RA) popularly known as Amir-i-Kabir and Shah-i-Hamadan, sanctified the terra firme of Kashmir by his presence to spread the religion of Islam everywhere in Kashmir and enthuse the populace with the true spirit of the complete way of life. The advent of the great saint harbingered the dawn of a new era in the sense that the socio-political situation of Kashmir took an earth-shattering turn and a forceful process of socio-cultural

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transformation began to emerge as a result of his onslaught on all kinds of social, political and cultural ills. Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani (12 Rajab 714 AH, or 22 Oct 1314 AD- 6 Zul Hijja, 786 or 19 January, 1385AD) reached Srinagar during the reign of Sultan Qutbu d-Din (1373-89, AD). Accompanied by about seven hundred followers¹, a majority of whom were great religious divines, Saiyid Ali Hamadani launched a robust movement of Islamizing Kashmir. Saiyid Ali Hamadani won large conversions in Kashmir. He authored more than one hundred and seventy books².

The three books, Zakhirat-ul-Maluk, Risala-i-Maktubat and Auradi-Fatiha are the most prominent and contain an account of his experiences and ideas. The Zakhirat-ul Maluk was the main guidebook of the Kubravis of Kashmir and the primary literary instrument for popularizing Islam³, mainly preaches ethical values and social justice as provided in Islam. Thus, alongside preaching against the social vices like greed, miserliness, extravagance, perfidy, hypocrisy, conceit, pride, jealousy, backbiting, vengeance, anger, cruelty, selfishness, fault-finding, lying, ill-manners and the like, Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani brings to fore those social, economic, cultural and politico-administrative aspects of Islam which are aimed at serving the interests of the poor, weak, and destitute sections of the society⁴.



He persuasively preached in favour of sharing wealth with the poor and needy⁵, good treatment towards one's parents, wives, servants, slaves, neighbours, friends and relatives⁶. He denounces haggling, black-marketing and cheating by traders and businessmen⁷. He even gives sermons against polluting the environment⁸ and blocking the pathways and roads by creating different kinds of barricades⁹. No less significant, however, are his views about the origin and nature of the state, theory of kingship and the advice he gives to the rulers with regard to running the administration¹⁰. The *Zakhirat-ul-Maluk* seems most urgent and appropriate message for our present-day politicians of all streams.

Saiyid Ali Hamadani is one of the few mystic philosophers who gave great importance to the reformation of moral values in their ethical philosophy¹¹. Saiyid Ali Hamadani wrote *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk* with the aim of discussing and elaborating the principles of the form and substance of power and governance (*Lawazim-i- qawa'id-i saltanat-i suwari-o-ma' nawi*) for those Muslim rulers and state officials who wished to set right the affairs of religion (*istislah-i umur-i din*)¹². The central idea of his philosophy is social justice which is derived from the fifth chapter of his book, *Zakhirat-ul-Maluk*; "relating to the injunctions of government, kingdom, sovereignty, the rights of the

public, the stipulations of governance, the dangers involved in the obligations and the necessity of justice and benevolence".

Saiyid Ali Hamadani starts the chapter with this quranic verse:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يُعْظِمُ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and he forbids all shameful deeds, injustice and rebellion, he instructs you, that ye may receive admonition".

On this verse of Quran, Saiyid Ali Hamadani comments:

"Almighty Allah desires bondmen to desist from the path of injustice and cruelty and asks them to follow the path of kindness, justice and benevolence. He also orders them to desist from the evil ways of life, particularly the kings and rulers who are entrusted with these duties and who have to look after the rights of the people¹⁴. Saiyid Ali Hamadani defines the good ruler of a state, as a person who had qualities of the Anbiya (Prophets) and Auliya (Saints)¹⁵. He puts forward the obligations of a good government for a just ruler which should form the guidelines for a king. He states ten rules of good governance which are as under:



1. When some incident occurs, the ruler should treat himself as though he were one among the subjects, and consider someone else as his ruler. In that situation if there is a command from another he does not think appropriate for himself, similarly he will not consider his own command as appropriate for another. And what he does not like for himself that he will not like for any other believer.

2. He will deem it the best kind of worship to fulfil requirements of the Muslims, since a tradition of the Prophet ﷺ says, "to give joy to a believer is as good as being loyal to all jinn and humans". Therefore, an obligation for a Muslim ruler is to look out for the needy, and when he knows that there is at his gate a believer in need he should not engage in any kind of devotion until he has fulfilled his need. And he should not desist from fulfilling the Muslims requirements for his personal comforts.

3. In matters of eating and dressing he should follow the pattern of the first four caliphs, and should not habituate himself to delicious food and gorgeous clothes. It is said that the day Hazrat Ali became caliph he went into the market-place and bought himself a shirt worth three dirhams whose sleeves and hem, too long for his arms and ankles, were scissored off. He was asked

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why he did so. He said: "To do this is to be nearer to piety, worthy of courtesy, and more decent as far as the following of the believers goes".

4. He should speak softly while giving a command, and not be unnecessarily exacting and annoyed listening to argument and proof, and not feel ashamed of having a word with the infirm and weak and poor. It is said that during the reign of Mamun, somebody guilty of a crime had fled. His brother was brought into Mamun's presence. Mamun ordered him to bring forth his brother or else he would be killed. He said "O Ameer! If one of your officials wants to kill me, but you order him to set me free, will he release me or not? Mamun said: "Yes, he will". He said: "I bring orders from that God who has appointed you to rule the people of the world:

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ¹⁶

(No burden - bearer shall bear another's burden)

Mamun said, "Let him go. He has presented his argument".

5. He should not show laxity or delay in taking a decision in order to please others, and should not think it lawful to violate the Sharia in order to please everybody. And he should be aware that presiding over administration is characterised by the fact that always



half the population is not pleased with the ruler, as either of the contending parties can't be pleased through the right decision. And it is not possible for a just ruler to seek the pleasure of all men. When the decision of the ruler is selfless and unalloyed and in the taking of his decision, his aim is to seek God's pleasure, and when he does not fear the displeasure of others, he enjoys the pleasure of God and makes people be pleased with it.

6. He should not be unmindful of the dangers besetting his government and country, and should know that administration and position is an instrument by which one can achieve eternal salvation and good reputation or everlasting misfortune and infamy and misery. And most earthly kings were such that they were fascinated by defiled earthly riches and who undermined their faith in pursuit of carnal pleasure and who ruined their faith in order to maintain their respect.... therefore, today when he wields he should make sure that his earthly riches don't become a cause of his hardship, hereafter and that he should walk the right and just path with determination. According to a tradition each day a just ruler's justice is weighed against the loyalty of his subjects and both weigh equal. Therefore, he should make sure that he doesn't deprive himself of this blessing.



7. He should incline to the company of pious men and religious scholars although such men have become rare in the present time, especially in this land. If by the blessing of God, he chances upon them, he should be eager to meet and consider their advice precious. And should avoid the company of ignorant men with the qualities of antichrist and of evil-doers in the garb of righteous men who in this age appear before men as learned and wise men who pray for every avaricious tyrant and praise them in order to satisfy their greed for wealth and property. Such men cause a setback to the faith, although they resemble scholarly and wise men. It is said that Harun Al Rashid summoned Shafiq Balakhi and said to him: "give me some advice". Shafiq said, "O Amir Al-Mumineen! God has an inn which is called Hell, and he has made you the gatekeeper of that inn. And he has given you the three things by which you can protect men from hell: wealth and sword and whip. With wealth you should stop men's starvation so that owing to need they do not adopt dubious methods; and with the sword you should obliterate the very basis of oppressors; and with the whip, you should punish evil-doers. If you do this, you will redeem yourself as also others. And if you act contrary to this, you will go to Hell before everybody else".



8. He should not strike terror in men's hearts through force and pride; he should rather endear himself to his subjects by treating weak men and subordinates with justice, affection and kindness.

9. He should not be unmindful of his administrator's perfidy and oppressive measures used by his officials. And he should not impose wolfish officers on defenceless subjects. And when the treason and oppression of one comes to his notice, he should be given condign punishment so that others take a lesson from him. He ought not to resort to laxity in administrative matters. He should reform the officials through counsel and warning.

10. The tenth condition is that of wisdom and understanding. It is the duty of a ruler to go into details as to why untoward incidents took place, and he should reflect on the occurrence of incidents and determine the nature of each decision in the light of reason and contemplate with absolute acumen matters allied to his decision and its results. If the matter on hand is clear it should be sorted out in the light of the Shariah, and if it is complex, he should go to the bottom of it with reason and understanding. In this matter he should nor rely on those who relate the incident, since occurrences are an unending process and their aspects also unending. That is why the finite can't solve the infinite¹⁷.



According to Saiyid Ali Hamadani, the subjects of a state have rights over the king and unless their rights are duly respected nobody can be safe from the punishment of the next world. He states twenty rights of the public as well as duties and functions of the executive arms of the government centred in the person of the king which are as under:

1. All Muslims should be treated with humility. Authority or kingship doesn't warrant arrogant behaviour towards any Muslim. Be it known that God considers them enemies who are proud and who do coercion.

2. Do not lend your ears to who carry tales, as that results in mischief and remorsefulness, especially to those who commit acts of impiety and who are selfish. A greedy man causes grief to entire community for just one morsel of food and a man of jealousy regards all good qualities as defects. Philosophers have said: "He who mentions other's shortcomings to you, will indeed mention yours to others". It is said that a man spoke ill of a Muslim in presence of Hazrat Ali. Hazrat Ali said: "we will call you to account for this. If you have spoken the truth, we will regard you as an enemy for backbiting, and if you have lied, we will punish you. And if you repent, we will pardon you". He said, "O Amir al-Mumineen! I'm sorry".



3. When a king is angry with a Muslim at a lapse of his, where it is possible to pardon him, he should not delay in pardoning him for more than three days but if the lapse is such that it has caused a harm to the religion, then he may send him away for life which would only be reasonable, but in earthly matters it is better to pardon him.

4. He should make justice and kindness common for all, and in spreading favour he should not distinguish between the merited and the unmerited, for a king is God's shadow. Just as God's grace comprehends both believers and non-believers, similarly a ruler's beneficence should take care of the virtuous and the unvirtuous.

5. He should not have lascivious desires on Muslim women because he derives might and superiority from his authority, and should not enter the houses of his subjects without their permission,

6. Considering the status of the people, they will take into consideration their position and degree while dealing with their affairs and while addressing them. He should not expect of lowly and shady characters fine speeches, nor hope to hear from illiterate pedestrians eloquent talk, nor even seek from inhabitants of hills and deserts etiquette characteristic of the elitist class. He



should dispose of everybody's affair in view of that man's situation, and appreciate the limitations of each class according to its position, and refrain from knitting his brow for having to face anybody.

7. At meetings and at places where people gather together, he should show respect to elders, especially those who are pious, and he should treat children with affection.

8. When he makes a commitment with a Muslim, he fulfils it, and going back on it he regards as unethical.

9. When he issues a command, he does not do so with harshness, but is affordable to all, low and high. He speaks softly with the weak and the invalid.

10. He observes justice while holding office in administration. He should be keen to administer justice to others as he would seek justice for himself from others. And he should treat Muslims as he would like them to treat himself.

11. He should consider it obligatory to bring about reconciliation between men in dispute, and should never delay in removing hostility among Muslims, and while the animosity is obvious, he should not resort to bestiality in giving his verdict, for that would lead to mutual jealousy and animus as also to disaster.



12. He should not try to expose the sinful acts of Muslims, nor should he harass his poor subjects for every lapse they commit. Rather he should, as far as he can, gloss over others lapses and cover up their failings.

13. If he is himself guilty of sensuality, he should not incite others to commit sin, and should refrain from accusation in order to keep himself off suspicion. And if by accident he gets involved in sinfulness, he ought to keep it concealed because in matters of piety and misdeeds, common people follow their governors and kings. If they see their governor treading the path of virtue, all incline to virtue, and the reward therefore is credited to the governor's account. And if he commits evil deeds and misdemeanour, then all succumb to sinfulness, evil and atrocious deeds, all of which credited into his account.

14. If a Muslim's need might find its fulfilment just by a single word put in by the governor, he should speak for him and not ignore the matter. One of the unique features of an administration is that significant matters are worked out by a single gesture from the administrator. A ruler should take advantage of such blessed moments.

15. He should give priority to the party of the poor and the weak over those who are mighty and affluent.



And he should often keep the company of saints and men of God, and should once a day illuminate his heart by preaching and counsel of the pious, as office and interaction with people darkens the heart, as also the contact with the affluent and men of the world. When these two kinds of darkness strike root in the heart, faith is exposed to danger which fact results in eternal slavery and despair.

16. He should not be unmindful of people facing starvation, and should not be remiss about finding a way out of starvation afflicting the weak, the disabled and the helpless. And he should share with orphans their grief and provide them with comfort, and he should fear the day of reckoning when, property, wealth and authority will not help, and all the deserving will demand from their ruler due which he can pay them now.

17. He should make secure roadways for Muslims against the threat of bandits and thieves by creating awe through caution and punitive measures and if somebody harms a Muslim and subjects him to his oppression, he should be made into an example for others by taking stern action against him. If there is a spot of danger in the country in need of repairs, it should be repaired, and if that is not possible, guards be posted there.



18. Wherever in the kingdom there is need for a bridge and an inn, all possible effort be made to construct these public places and that the matter be not ignored.

19. For each area inhabited by Muslims, a mosque be constructed for which an imam and a muezzin be appointed with means of their livelihood so that they can observe with convenience the time for prayers, which will be possible if they do not have to look for their nourishment elsewhere.

20. He should not give up issuing orders for fulfilment of assignments and forbidding things which violate the Shariah and should not keep himself from counselling others in the light of religion. And he should order the subjects in his kingdom to obey God and also keep them from sin, and caution them sternly against doing what is unlawful and against the Shariah¹⁸. Saiyid Ali Hamadani discussed the rights of non-Muslims separately. It's the duty of every Muslim king and ruler to safeguard the life and property of non-Muslims. It is pertinent to mention here that Saiyid Ali Hamadani is the only Sufi Philosopher amongst the political thinkers, who has discussed the rights of the subjects and define the duties of a ruler for his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. Saiyid Ali Hamadani gives



Hindu's freedom to follow the fundamentals of their faith¹⁹. This noble contribution of the Saiyid Ali Hamadani is an improvement on the concept of Al-Ghazzali²⁰ in the field of politics. These political ideas and views influenced the contemporary rulers as well as convinced the common Kashmiri people specially and generally of the Muslim world. He did everything whatever was possible to inspire the Sultanate (in Kashmir) to remodel itself on the lines of a theocratic state. Saiyid Ali Hamadani left a deep imprint on the religious, political, and social lives of Kashmiris. His teachings are a great source of inspiration for us²¹. Hamadani's political thought is a part of his general philosophy which is based on Sharia. Like al-Mawardi he led a political life and never kept himself aloof from socio-political situations of his times. The question of ultimate end was chief concern for him and it is this question which dragged him into the discussion of Political concepts like state, ruler, types of citizens and rights and duties of citizens²².

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Chihl Asrar: A Critical Evaluation

Prof. G R Malik

Chihl Asrar is one of the most invaluable gifts of Shāh-e-Hamadān to us. Like his other great works-*Dhakhirat al-Mulook*, *Minhaj al-Arifin*, *Awrad al-Fathiyah*-it springs from an intensely personal mystical and spiritual experience and, like them illuminates the soul and revitalizes the heart. It consists of forty-one ghazals which, as the legend goes, were gifted by him to his different disciples simultaneously. Ever since their composition, these ghazals have been read and reread, particularly in Kashmir with a deep sense of reverence and devotion towards their author. For a literary evaluation of these poems, primary importance is to be

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attached to their text and relevant aspects of the poet's life and the age to which he belonged.

Essentially Shāh-e-Hamadān was a sincere and dedicated servant of Islam. It was his missionary zeal for Islam which brought him from his homeland Hamadan to Kashmir in the fourteenth century A.D. Islam had been introduced here before his arrival but on a very limited scale. In making it the religion of Kashmir's masses his role was, undoubtedly, the most significant. Fittingly, therefore, Kashmiris revere him as *Amir-i - Kabir*, *Shāh-e-Hamadān*, *Ali-e-Thani* and *Bani-e-Musalmani* (founder of the Muslim creed in Kashmir). His personality has several dimensions, each as effulgent as the other, but all of them are subservient to his role as a dedicated servant of Islam. This holds equally good for his remarkable output in prose and verse and has got to be borne in mind as the most important premise for its appropriate understanding and appreciation. In other words, his poetry is religious poetry and is to be approached as such.

In a way religious poetry can broadly be divided into two categories. The first category consists of religious poems which present religious dogmas and matters relating to fiqh in a versified form in order to make them memorable and impart to them a sweetness of sorts.

Essentially this poetry is not different from those mechanical pedagogical devices which put across dry and insipid grammatical lessons in versified language as the following three verses about huroof al-jar, huroof al-jawazim al-mudare and zawaidat:

بَاءٌ وَتَاءٌ وَكَافٌ وَلامٌ وَواوٌ وَمِمْزٌ وَمِمْزٌ خَلا
 إِلَى حَتَّى عَلَى عَن فِي عَدَا حَاشَا مِنْ رَبِّ
 نِيزَ نَهَى أَمْرٌ وَلَاءٌ لِّمَّا وَلَامٌ وَلَمْ، إِنْ
 دَغَلَمَ يَكْ أُنْدُوهُرَ فَعْلٌ جَازِمٌ حَرْفٌ پَنْجْ
 اِسْمُهَا عَنِ الذَّوَائِدَاتِ الْحُرُوفَ سَأَلْتُ
 تَسْهِيلَ وَأَمَانَ يَبْخُلُ وَلَمْ فَقَالَتْ

There are many insurances in which this device of verification has been adopted to expound intricate problems of fiqh and fundamental religious truths from the Quran and the sunnah. This poetry is limited by the aim that it sets for itself and no intelligent and perceptive student of literature approaches it with expectations of aesthetic gratification. As can easily be seen, conscious craftsmanship plays a greater role in the production of this type of poetry than feeling, emotion and subconscious impulses.

The second category of religious poetry is not meant to catechize and preach religion but takes its origin from



a profound religious experience and a mysterious and complex mystical vision. Such an experience is felt in the deepest recesses of a person's being, enters the movement of his blood and the beat of his pulse and, in consequence, gives rise to authentic poetry. The difficulty with mystical experience is that, because of being essentially irrational, it is, in general, incommunicable. The most important feature that the poetical and the mystical experiences share in common is that both have strong illogical components but with significant differences of both kind and degree. The mystical experience transcends reason almost in its totality and therefore, defies communication. In the poetical experience, on the other hand, the rational and the irrational, the conscious and the unconscious elements are organically mingled together which renders the task of communication relatively less difficult. The fact is that communication is not the precise word to be used in relation to poetry as it suggests the analogy of a vehicle carrying something over whereas the poet grasps his experience in the form of words only and when poetry is at its most creative, these words are irreplaceable. A person who combines in himself the vision of a mystic and the creative talent of a poet has full realization of the overwhelming difficulties of communicating himself to others. He

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finds that language fails him and that words refuse to obey as they tend to break under the burden. In the words of T S Eliot:

"... Words strain

crack and sometimes break under the burden,

under the tension, slip, slide, perish.

decay with imperfection." (Burnt Norton)

To rise equal to one such desperate occasion
Maulana Jalal al-din Rumi prays:

اے خدا بنمائے جاں را آں مقام
کندر اں بے صرف می روید کلام

"O God, let my soul attain to a status

*Where utterance grows without depending on letter
and word."*

All human language is essentially meant to communicate such experiences as originate from man's contact with sensible reality, with phenomena. As far as those experiences are concerned

which relate to the metaphysical and suprasensible reality, with noumena, with states of the soul which is a part of the unseen, human knowledge fails to embody



and communicate them in their totality although on rare occasions it may vaguely adumbrate them. Mystical visionaries gifted with genuine creative talent try to break and remake language in order to enable it to bear the burden of their extraordinary experience.

Specimens of this kind of authentic religious poetry can be seen in the works of Maulana Rumi, Hakeem Abu Saeed Abu al-Khair, Donne (of the holy sonnets), George Herbert, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossette, T S Eliot (of *The Four Quartets*) and, nearer home, Lalla Arifah. This kind of religious poetry does not necessarily spring from a faith assailed by doubt or a dogma undisturbed by any searching questionings. Most often it is the result of a deep-rooted angst and unrest produced by unresolvable personal dilemmas, restlessness of doubt, a tormenting sense of the nullity of human existence, a baffling observation of the conflict of good and evil within and outside man, and the feeling of utter bewilderment and helplessness in a mind-bogglingly mysterious universe. From the creative point of view, this type of religious poetry is the most vital, the most effective and the most appealing.

The poetry of Shāh-e-Hamadān stands somewhere in between the two categories of religious poetry mentioned above. It is neither mere teaching and



preaching nor is it the product of a profound anguish and conflict. Instead, it represents an unshakeable faith in certain beliefs and convictions and the serenity of a voluntary surrender of will to the Creator of all being. The poetry born of this confident and placid faith has its own beauties and charms.

One of its greatest charms is the conversion of simplicity itself into poetry. Simple and bare truth has an appeal of its own and does not suffer a whit for want of artificial decoration and embellishment. When Tagore's *Gitanjali* flows-smooth, serene and musical with...

"Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure."

It casts a spell on the reader. Of this nature is the serenity reflected in Dante's,

"In Thy will is our peace."

Such are the following specimens of poetry:

"Thou hast made me and shall thy work decay."

(Donne)

"Ah my dear God! Though I am clean forgot;

Let me not love thee, if I love thee not."

(George Herbert)

"Nothing begins and nothing ends

That is not paid with moan

For we are born in other's pain

And perish in our own."

(Francis Thompson)

"The birthday of my life

Is come, my love is come to me."

(Christina Rossetti)

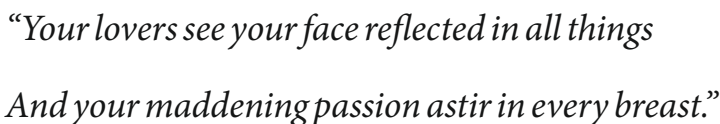
Genuinely creative poetry like this has almost the same degree of authenticity as the second category of religious poetry. Verses like these, however, are very rare in Chihl Asrar though they are not entirely non-existent. Following are some such rare instances:

کائنات ورقِ بر عیاں علانی دید
سجود در رخِ پیش کون ذرات جمله

"Alaie saw manifest on the open page of the universe

Objects of all hue prostrate before his face."

مینند اشیاء همه در رختِ عکسِ عاشقان
سیر سوداے تو در سینه هویدا میشوند



قبلہ دل آفتاب روئے اوست
کعبہ جاں خاک راہ کوئے اوست

*“The sun of his face is the qibla of the heart
And the dust of his pathway the Ka'ba of the soul.”*

گدزیابی دے کولیش برسر تو اگر
نظریابی بیک عالم دو غیب کوز
قدس عالم روحانیانِ مجلس چراغِ
یابی خبر جاں نور از گر تست نور ز
ہر دم ز لامکاں غیبی ہاتھ ندائے
خبر مابی خود از گر شنوی دل سماع بہ

*“Could you pass for a moment through the pathway of
the Beloved,*

*At one glance you would gather the unseen treasures
of both the worlds.*

The lamp of the sanctuary of the holiest of the holy

*Shall borrow your light if you could discover the lustre
of the soul.*

The voice of the unseen angel from the Abode of the

Abodeless

Shall reach your heart's ear if only you knew yourself."

تو کوئے دوست ہی جوئی و نمیدانی
کہ گر نظریہ حقیقت کنی تو آں کوئی

"You are in search of the Beloved's pathway, little knowing,

That if you could see the truth, you, yourself are that pathway."

The first two verses recall to mind Sadi's great distich:

برگ درختان سبز در نظر ہوشیار
ہر ورقے دفتریت معرفتِ کردگار

"These leaves on green trees when viewed with a discerning eye,

Each leaf a record within record of signs to know the Creator."

And the last three verses remind us of Rumi and Iqbal as well as the mystical philosophy represented by the famous Arabic saying,

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

"One who knows his self certainly knows his God also."



It is, however, to be borne in mind that the essential note of Shāh-e-Hamadān's poetry is not that of self-assertion but that of self-effacement and negation, the mingling of the drop with the ocean

چو قطره غرق دریا شد به کلی
همه دریاست آنجا کیف و کم نیست

“As the drop mingles itself with the ocean

It is the ocean itself-no more, no less.”

بود خس علای جان و آتش جانان عشق
خس چو در آتش فنا شد دیگر آس را خس نخواں

“The Beloved's love is fire and Alaie's self hay;

As hay burns in the fire, it is no longer known as hay.”

This Unitarian monism (wahdat al-wujud) whose traces are visible here and there in Chihil Asrar is the only theme of Shāh-e-Hamadān's Quasidah entitled Kanz-ul-Yaqin (The Treasure-house of Belief). Kanz-ul-Yaqin seems to be an echo of Ibn Arabi's pantheism and Mansoor Al Hallaj's cry of ana al-Haque (I am the true one). It presents all phenomena of the universe and all day-to-day occurrence of human history as various manifestations of God.

بلزید و شبلی مو معروف کرخی و جنید
 شد بسیار من نام آمد ذات یک گماں بے
 دریکے محبوب گشتم دریکے عاشق شدم
 عاشقی و شب روی دل را ازیں جاکار شد
 کربلا شہید یعنی مرتضیٰ، چشم نور
 از فراق و آرزویم کشته کفار شد
 مظہر من ایں قصیدہ نیست از گفتار من
 در زبان من سخن گو واحد القہار شد

“Abu Yazid, Shibli, Ma'ruf al-Karkhi and Junaid

Are various names of one and only one.

In one I appear as beloved, in another as the lover;

Witness my heart in love and nocturnal wandering.

The martyr of Karbala, the light of Murtadha's eyes,

Fell to the non-believers in separation from my love.

This quasidah which I utter is not my manifestation,

It is the one, the dominant one, who speaks in my tongue.”

Kanz al-Yaquin seems to be an expansion of Shaikh Mahmud Shabistari's famous verse from his Gulshan-i-Raz (The Garden of Mystery):

روا باشد انا الحق از درخت
چرا نبود روا از نیک بخت

“If it is permissible for a tree to say 'I am the Real’

Why should it not be permissible for an excellent man?”

This kind of pantheism may not be acceptable to all votaries of Tawhid (unity of Godhead). In *Chihl Asrar*, on the other hand, the tone of Unitarian monism (wahdat al-wujud) is remarkably subdued. This imparts to it a subtlety and an ambiguity which

makes it a better work of creative art than *Kanz al-Yaquin*. In fact, the Unitarian monism of *Chihl Asrar* is essentially a version of tawhid itself and seems to be hardly different from

phenomenological monism (wahdat al-shuhud). This basic contradiction between the thought of the two works casts a great doubt on the claim that *Kanz al-Yaquin* was written by Shāh-e-Hamadān. This is confirmed by its serious loopholes of language which suggests that it cannot be the composition of Shāh-e-Hamadān.

The genealogy of the poetry of *Chihl Asrar* can be traced to the ghazals of Maulana Jalal al-Din Rumi but

the Marlana's ghazals are characterized by a philosophical depth, a profound mystical vision, a feeling of rapture and intoxication, a sense of amazement, an attitude of voluntary abandon, and a breadth of canvas which the ghazals of *Chihl Asrar* do not possess. A few citations from the Maulana will help illustrate the point:

من بے خود تو بے خود مارا کہ برد خانہ
 من چند ترا گفتم کم خور دوسہ پیانہ
 اے لولی بربط زن تو مست تری یا من
 افسانہ من افسونِ مستے تو چو پیش اے

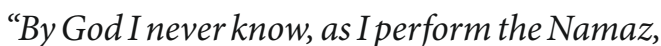
“I am drunk as well as you; now who shall carry us home?”

How many times did I admonish you to drink less by a cup and two

O my dulcimer-playing gypsy-love, who is more rapt - me or you?

Before a one so rapt as you, my magic crumbles like a myth.”

بخدا خبر ندارم چو نماز و اگزارم
 کہ تمام شد رر کوئے کہ امام شد فلانے



When the ruku (kneeling) finishes and who leads the prayer.”

چو غلام آفتابم ہم از آفتاب گویم
گویم خواب حدیث کہ پرستم شب نہ شتم نہ

"As I am the sun's slave, I will sing of the sun alone:

I am neither the night nor night's worshipper, to sing of sleep and dream."

بنمائے رخ کہ باغ و گلستانم آرزوست
آرزوست فراوانم قند کہ لب بکشانے
یار زلفِ بکدست و بادہ جام یکدست
رقصے چنین میان میدانم آرزوست

“Unveil your face for I crave for the bloom of the flower garden;

Open your lips as I wait for sweetness abounding.

The sparkling goblet in one hand, the beloved's tresses in the other and then an ecstatic dance in the middle of the ground."

چوں در دل ما آئی تو دامن خود برکش
تا حامہ نہ لائی از خون جگر حانا

— ❖ — ❖ — ❖ —
“My love, draw up your skirt when you slide into my heart

So that its blood does not smear your garment.”

صدمہ زاراں گل صدمہ رگت زخا کم روید
چونکہ در سایہ آں سرو گلستاں میرم

“Millions of hundred-petalled roses will bloom from my dust

As I die in the shadow of the cypress of my flower garden.”

اے خداوند کیے یار جفاکارش دہ
دلبر عشوہ گرو سرکش و خونخوارش دہ
کن بیماش تجربہ پئے ز روزے چند
باطیبیان جفا پیشہ سروکارش دہ

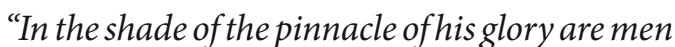
“O God, bless her with a faithless and cruel love

A heart-ravishing, blood-thirsty, unruly coquette.

Let her take ill for a few days by way of trial

And be at the mercy of deceitful doctors.”

بزیہ کنگرہ کبریاش مردانند
فرشتہ صید و پیہر شکار و زنداں گیر



Who hunt angels, prey on prophets and ensnare God himself.”

حاصل عمرم سه سخن بیش نیست
خام بدم، پخته شدم، سو ختم

“Three words constitute my life's harvest:

I was raw, I ripened, I was consumed up."

Needless to say, that for such poetry as this, we do not turn to works like *Chihl Asrar*.



Lalla Ded and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Kashmir is not only famous all over the world for its charming views, lush green valleys, lofty mountains and crystal-clear waters but also for its incredible people who proved their mettle in all spheres and established their identity on a global level. In this galaxy of extraordinary personalities, Lalla Ded (c.1320-1392), the mystical poetess of Kashmir, makes her way as a beacon of excellence and emerges as a unique voice in world poetry. Literary figures such as Richard Temple, Grierson and Frithjof Shuan have praised Lalla Ded's mystical poetry, and her popularity has only increased in modern times. She was a proponent of the Kashmir



Shaivism school of Hindu philosophy, which is an idealistic monism which identifies self-realisation with God-realisation, and her verses, called *vakhs*, reflect the same ideas and are regarded as one of the earliest compositions in the Kashmiri language. According to Prof. Shafi Shauq, “Lalla Ded, a woman of extraordinary creative genius, visionary, and profound mystic of the fourteenth century Kashmir, is rightly considered the founder of Kashmiri poetry.” (1) Lalla is considered the greatest poet and one of the patron saints of Kashmir, and she remains central to its literary and cultural history. Her moving verses have been passed from generation to generation and almost entirely memorised by common Kashmiris until recently. There is hardly any Kashmiri who does not remember some of her *vakhs*, sayings or some incident attributed to her. According to Prof. G. R. Malik, “Lalla Ded's life and identity are shrouded in a thick cloud of myth and legend.” (2) So, we do not have exact dates of her birth and death, but she is placed between 1320 and 1392 AD by different biographers. Jaya Lal Koul surmises on the basis of his researches that she was born sometime between 1317 and 1320. Khwaja Azam Dedmari tells us that she lived during the reign of Sultan Alauddin (1334-55) and died in the reign of Sultan Shihabuddin (1355-73).



One among the myths and legends, whose authenticity may not be established, woven around her is that she benefitted from personal interactions with the apostle of Islam in Kashmir, Shah e Hamadan Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. Shah e Hamadan visited Kashmir three times between 1372 and 1384, so it is historically possible that she might have met him and even accepted Islam at his hands, as the people of Kashmir believe. Although contemporary historians such as Jonaraja and Shridhar have not mentioned her name, the later historians have mentioned her with great respect, like Khwaja Azam Dedmari, Birbal Kachro, and Hasan Khoihami. They refer to her with reverential titles like '*Arifa Kamila Lal Majzooba*', '*Afifa Khuda Parast*', and '*Bibi Lal Arifa Kamila Thani Rabia*' respectively. According to G. R. Malik, "The only biographical facts which can stand the test of scrutiny are that she was born in Pandrethan and married at an early age to a Brahman boy of Pampore, where she had to undergo persecution at the hands of a more than proverbially harsh mother-in-law and a difficult husband." (3)

At the age of 24, she left her family, relinquished her social and familial responsibilities, and became a wandering dervish. There are many popular legends about Lal Ded, like how she, being spiritually intoxicated, chose to ignore the normal dress code and



go around naked in public. This state of wandering 'naked' came to an end when she encountered Mir Syed Ali Hamdani. It is said that she used to wander naked for not finding a single man in the true sense, and when Syed Ali Hamadani arrived in Kashmir, one day she saw him at a distance and cried out, "I have seen a man," and in shame turned and fled. Seeing a baker's shop close by, she leaped into the blazing oven and disappeared, apparently consumed to ashes. The saint followed her and enquired if any woman had come that way, but the baker's wife, out of fear, denied that she had seen anyone. The saint continued his search, and suddenly Lalla appeared from the oven clad in the green garments of paradise. It is said that she accepted Islam at the hands of Syed Ali Hamadani and was deeply influenced by his thought, and they exchanged many spiritual discourses.

(4)

However, Dedmari in "*Waqat-e-Kashmir*" has raised questions about the meeting between Hamadani and Lalla Ded. He writes, "According to the researchers, the story of the presence of Syed Ali Hamadani in the times of Lalla Ded has not been proven." (5). However, according to some historians and oral traditions found in Kashmir, their meeting is well established. Jaya Lal Kaul writes, "Hazrat (Shah Hamdan) Amir Kabir lived in Kashmir from 1380-1379 to 1386-1385. It is said that

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Lalla Ded had many meetings with him during this period." (6)

Birbal Kachru's book '*Majmuat ul-Tawareikh*' contains several miraculous events related to Lalla Ded, including the incident of the baker's shop and the oven. Dr Shamsuddin Ahmad also writes that during his second trip to Kashmir, Syed Ali Hamadani met Lalla Ded and went to Kaimoh [Kulgam] along with her. (7) It is said that Hamadani brought about a change in Lalla Ded's perception, and she gained extraordinary popularity as an *Arifa*. According to PNK Bamzai, "That Syed Ali Hamadani's deep scholarship and his spiritual attainments were responsible for the furtherance of the conversion of the valley to Islam goes without saying. He came in contact with the popular Saiva teacher Lalleswari [Lalla Ded] ... and had long discourses with them on spiritual and philosophic subjects. Lalleswari's association with Shah Hamadan was due to an identity of the faith of Sufis and Hindu mendicants and saints in Kashmir. The Sufis had charm of manners and attractive personalities, and treating all religions alike, they naturally preferred the faith to which they themselves belonged and which their patrons favoured. It was, therefore, natural that they should have influenced the people among whom they lived and worked and thus

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facilitated the peaceful propagation of Islam among the people in Kashmir." (8)

Lalla Ded preached against idol-worship, superstition and the caste system and propagated the oneness of mankind and the oneness of God. Some scholars say that actually she adopted these ideas under the influence of Syed Ali Hamadani and other Sufis. She shares her firm belief in *wahdat-ul-wujud* (unity of being) with most of the Sufi saints, including Shah e Hamadan. Prof. Arvind Gigoo writes,

“She [Lalla Ded] held discussions with the Iranian Sufi Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, who came to Kashmir to spread Islam, and with her guru Siddha Srikanth. She is believed to have spoken prophetic words of profound philosophical value.” (9)

“You are the sky; you are the earth.

You are day, air and night.”

Jaya Lal Koul mentions this *vakh* of Lalla Ded in his book, which clearly indicates that she had a firm belief in the *kalima* of Islam.

kalimaye porum, kalimaye sorum

kalimaye koutsum panunaye paan

kalimaye hani hani mouyam tourum (10)

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I recited the *Kalima* (لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله ﷺ) and gained its knowledge.

Applied the same upon myself.

This word has deeply moved every part of my being.

It is due to this that Lalla reached the Infinite.

According to many biographers, Lalla met with other Muslim Sufis like Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari, Syed Hussain Samnani, Mir Syed Ali Hamdani, etc. According to the famous poet-critic of the Kashmiri language, Abdul Ahad Azad, Syed Hussain Samnani came to Kashmir in 773 AH, and Lalla Ded visited him and learnt many things from him. (11) Lalla Ded is considered to be the mouthpiece of the ideas of many Muslim and Hindu thinkers of her age. To Lalla, religion is more an affair of the heart than of the head.

'When my mind was cleansed of impurities, like a mirror of its dust and dirt,

I recognised the Self in me:

When I saw Him dwelling in me,

I realised that He was the Everything and I was nothing.'



She had a tolerant and inclusive attitude. She emerges as a meeting point between Hindu Shaivism and Islamic Sufism, and it seems that she benefitted from both of them. For her, there is no contradiction or clash between the two faiths, but there is a middle path where they can play a positive role in reforming the lives of the common people. According to Dr Brij Premi, she had reached the stage of knowledge where there was no distinction between Hindu and Muslim, colour and race, or caste and family. (12)

It becomes clear from the above-mentioned references that we cannot say much about her with authenticity, as her life is 'shrouded in a thick cloud of myth and legend'. However, her interactions with Mir Syed Ali Hamadani cannot be ruled out, as they were contemporaries and shared many ideas on religion and spirituality. Besides, over the ages, their interactions have become an integral part of the folk memory of the people of Kashmir.

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Evaluating the Theological aspect of Awrad-i-Fathiyyah: A Study

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Tawhid is the most important fundamental aspect of Islamic belief system. The word *Tawhid* in Arabic is derived from “*Wahdah*”, means to ascribe oneness to something. So, literally it means the oneness of something. But within the religious parlance of Islam, it means the absolute unity of Al-mighty *Allah* in His essence as well as attributes. It also means realizing and maintaining *Allah's* unity in all of man's actions which are directly or indirectly related to Him. In fact, it is the base of Islam—the foundation and the pivotal point. It

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has been patently delineated by the scholars of theology, scholasticism and mysticism. Muhammad Zafar al-Allah Khan Comments on the doctrine of Tawhid as; “the central pivot around which the whole doctrine and teachings of Islam revolves is the unity of the Godhood.” Ismail Raji Faruqi, another prominent scholar of Islam, defines *Tawhid* as the essence and core of Islam. It is, in fact, the first determining principle of Islam, its culture and civilization, its identity which binds all its constituents together and makes them an integral, organic body. Shah-i-Hamadan—the pioneer of Tawhid in Kashmir, too has discussed on the doctrine of Tawhid in a very lucid manner. His works especially *Awrad* describes exclusively the oneness of God in His essence and attributes. The treatise is the earliest treatise in Kashmir penned down on the theme of Monotheism. The study is meant to enumerate the personality of Hamadani in the light of theological discourse of Islam and present him—the pioneer of *Tawhid* in Kashmir but in the whole world as well.

Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah*

The most important personality in the annals of Islam in Kashmir is none but Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani who not only spread but consolidated Islam in Kashmir on esoteric lines. He, indeed, was a great scholar of his



time, authored hundreds of works on the diverse themes of Islam like Quran, Hadith, Tasawwuf, Morality and Polity. Most of the works are available in

Manuscript form or in published form. Some of them are plausibly extinct. So, it is complicated to ascertain the actual number of the works of Hamadani.

As a spiritual traveler, he journeyed the whole world thrice under the guidance of his preceptor, Shaikh Mahmud Muzdaqani for experiencing spirituality, meeting with Sufi saints and performing the missionary work. He is said to have travelled the then inhabited world thrice (*Raba' Maskoon*) and met numerous Sufis and 'Ulema' of his times. Among the journeys of Hamadani, the journey of Kashmir is most significant one, meant for the propagation of Islam, upliftment of human values and development of economic prosperity.

He came to Kashmir during the time when Kashmir was under the Muslim rule but Muslims were far away from the spirit of Islam. The Sultanate period of Muslims in Kashmir, prior to the emergence of Hamadani, was by fame Muslims. The spirit of Islam was nowhere found among the early rulers. During this time, the Muslims and Hindus used to perform similar activities and holds same faith. It was so difficult to differentiate the Muslims and Non-Muslims. The people of Kashmir were



polytheists indiscriminately. It is the relentless efforts of Hamadani that the Kashmiris got acquaintance with the fundamental doctrines of Islam and began to act accordingly. For that Hamadani established Khanqahs and Madrasas to create awareness among the common masses towards the basics of Islam. He also wrote many treatises not only to respond the queries regarding the issues of his times but also to familiarize the common Muslims towards the basics of Islam. To distinguish Muslims from others in belief and actions, to propagate the Islamic injunctions and to perform his missionary work, Hamadani compiled and gifted *Awrad-i-Fathiyyah* to Kashmiris. This work proves highly influential for all times to get acquaintance with the fundamental doctrines of Islam especially *Tawhid*.

Awrad-e-Fathiyyah is one among those works of Hamadani which has been published repeatedly. This treatise is easily accessible for one and all. The treatise has been translated in many languages viz. Persian, English, Urdu etc. Number of *Awrad* commentaries has been written by expert Islamic scholars for the in-depth understanding of the *Awrad*. Among the commentaries, some of them are as under;

- *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* Urdu Tr. with Commentary by Assadullah Shah Dwarki under the title *Tafhim al Awrad*, n.d. Lahore.



- *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* Urdu Tr. with Commentary by Assadullah Misbahi under the title *Sabil ul-Rashaad fi-Sharhi Awrad*, Maktab Sheikh-ul-Aalam, Anantnag.
- *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* Urdu Tr. with Commentary by Hakeem Ghulam Nabi under the title *Sharhi Awrad-i-Fathiyya*, Chinara Publications, Srinagar, 1998.
- *Muqaddimah* of *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* by Syed Qasim Shah Bukhari under the title *Anfas-i-Qudsiyya*, Book Bell, Srinagar, 1415 A.H.
- *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* Urdu Tr. with Commentary by Shafkat-ullah Beigh under the title *Daulat-ul-Kashmir Min Tarf al-Amir al-Kabir—Sharh-i-Awrad-i-Fathiyya*, Maktaba Ahle Sunnat, Anantnag, n.d.
- *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* Urdu Tr. with Commentary by Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Haqani under the title *Tohfay Rasul Allah* وسلم عليه الله صلى Sharhi *Awrad-i-Fathiyya*, Idara Ishaat Din-i-Islam, Pulwama, Kashmir, 2004.

Numerous manuscripts of *Awrad* are preserved in libraries of different countries viz. Tajikistan, India, Qatar, Iran, Saudi Arabia etc which demarcates the

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essentiality and richness of the substance of *Awrad*, and the influential personality of Hamadani globally. *Awrad* has also the credit of being the first substantiated work written on the doctrine of *Tawhid* in Kashmir.

Regarding the loud recitation, The *Awrad* is recited in chorus in Kashmir after the dawn prayer. It has the magnanimity of being remembered by people of literate and illiterate. It is also recited in homes for achieving the blessing of God and for the repelling of evilness. The *Awrad* is the sign of the Khanqahs and the culture of Kashmir. 20th Century Scholars of Kashmir have acknowledged the fact that after the departure of Hamadani, *Awrad* has been and is continuously reciting in Kashmir. The way of chanting *Awrad* in Kashmir is different in different places but everywhere demonstrates the delicate and melodious tune. The *Award* is indeed in prose form but the unique chanting in Kashmir depicts it as poetry to the listeners. The unique chanting not only pleases the listeners but contends the reciters as well.

Awrad-i-Fathiyya—the Sermon of Tawhid

Indeed, *Awrad-e-Fathiyyah* consists of *Masnoon* Prayers and invocations is a book based on the *wazaif* (Litanies) received by Sufi saints of his time but it is equally a fundamental book which reveals foundational



Islamic belief system—*Tawhid*. Is this a book of litanies only or the treasure of Islamic beliefs or combination of both is almost an ignored issue, needs to tackle with keenness and diligently. Taking the history of collecting and compiling of the booklet into consideration, it may be aptly said that it is the book of litanies received from different Sufi saints in different places during the course of his travels. The question of Hamadani's dream during his pilgrimage and the gifting of the booklet to Kashmiris with general permission demonstrate the doctrinal aspect of it. It can be concluded that the booklet holds both aspects which are visible from the observations and the statements of scholars and Sufis. The study essentially focuses on the latter aspect of *Awrad*, hence will not describe the former (litanies) aspect of it.

Awrad-e-Fathiyyah is the book of Tawhid is self-evident. Its every line is the expression of Tawhid, substantiated by Quran and Sunnah. Summarizing the theme of *Awrad* will extremely be outlined as Islamic Monotheism. It demonstrates the Islamic concept of monotheism in a simple and tangible manner for the understanding of common Kashmiri masses. The way Tawhid has been described in it can be understood well by the statement of one of the commentators of *Awrad*, Hakeem Gh. Nabi who acknowledges and eulogizes the

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theological subtext of the *Awrad*. He said that the way Hamadani has described tawhid is unique and can't be expressed in words. He described it in a very precise manner.

Abu Umar, while unfolding the *Awrad* states that it is better to call *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* as the Book of Tawhid. Because the Tawhid in it is described in a whole some manner and it exterminates shirk in total. As *Surah Ikhlas* is called the *Surah* of Tawhid, so is *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* called as the Book of Tawhid. *Surah Ikhlas* discusses Tawhid with all its manifestations. *Awrad* also describes it with all its manifestations and connotations.

Indeed, *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* is the extract of miscellaneous verses of *Quran* and Traditions of Prophet Muhammad related to *Tawhid* in a concise but comprehensive manner, which is the solid proof of Hamadani and his associates, the real preachers of *Tawhid*. *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* is the manifestation of all kinds of Tawhid presented in a lucid and whole some manner which is understandable for common masses. Syed Ali Hamadani freed the crucial and foundational doctrine of Islam from all the scholastic and philosophical chains—the important chapter of the history of *Ilm al-Kalam*. The way of presenting Tawhid is so much impressive that the forerunners of Hamadani



had influenced by *Awrad-i-Fathiyya*. They too have propagated the belief of Islamic monotheism in the same pattern especially shaikh Nur-ud-Din. Shaikh Nur-ud-Din described Tawhid in quintessence the way as Hamadani in the local language of Kashmir.

Unity of God exists in one or the other form from the very beginning of Kashmir history in the existing religions of Buddhism and Hinduism but Syed, for the first time in Kashmir history, connected it with the *risalah* of Muhammad , which only then assumed the shape of *Tawhid*, as God Himself had described *Tawhid* through the *risalah* of Muhammad in 112th chapter of Quran. This attachment with *risalah* purified it from all polytheistic tendencies, in which Kashmiris were involved, even after embracing Islam.

Syed 'Ali focusing on the belief of *Tawhid*, which is the main motive behind God's creation, the main task of His messengers and fundamental teaching of *Quran*. Syed 'Ali encompassed the whole concept of *Tawhid* in this treatise in a wholesome manner and succeeded to present it in an attractive and appealing way, both for commoners and particulars. It is the unique style of Hamadani's writings, describes the venture and delicate themes in simple but presentable and easily understandable way, i-e why his *Awrad* is continuously

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recited and eulogized in Kashmir from the very beginning till now, not only by laymen but by the intellectuals in the same stern. The Kashmiris existed as the polytheists from the very beginning of history, emerged now as the propounders of Islamic monotheism, is only the paragon of *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* of Syed 'Ali Hamadani. From past centuries of time, the foreign and indigenous Sufi Saints and Scholars in common and Mir Syed 'Ali Hamadani in particular, have preached the real Islamic monotheism in Kashmir, is reflected from *Awrad-i-Fathiyya*. He had put forward the *Tawhidic* creed of Islam in accumulation with a logical and rational way encompasses all categories and kinds of *Tawhid* along with the refutation from shirk of category and kind.

To make an analysis of Liturgical Prayer—*Awrad-i-Fathiyya* of Amir-i-Kabir, depicts the clear image of abundance of theological substance existed in it and the methodology of him in preaching the Islam. Syed 'Ali as a Scholar ('*Alim*) preached common Ash'arite creed of *Tawhid* to the general people and Sufi connotation of it to the particulars only. As the *Awrad* is meant for commoners, so the description of *Tawhid* in it is also based on theology tangible to everyone.

Conclusion

Mir Syed Ali Hamadani presented Islam as *Din* and consolidated it in Kashmir. The most dominant aspect of Islam is what is called “Tawhid” i.e., Oneness of Being. It not only depicts the Oneness of God in His essence and attributes but also the equality of human beings as the creation of God. Hamadani propagated the doctrine of tawhid and the idea of humanity throughout his life especially in *Awrad-e-Fathiyya* which succeeds to create a sense of “unity in diversity”—the core of Islamic mysticism. The concept of “Tawhid” and “Unity in diversity” accelerated the message of Hamadani which spread nook & corner of valley within a short span of time and remains alive for centuries. Precisely speaking, *Awrad-e-Fathiyya* is rich in terms of theological substance and has and will work as a guide for humanity towards the Oneness of God and the equality of human beings.

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3. Shaikh Mahmud Muzdaqani was his spiritual guide under whom Hamadani learnt the lessons of spirituality for many years. On his order, Hamadani travelled throughout the world for thrice.
4. Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani is reported to have travelled three times over the whole known world and met 1400 Sufis and 'Ulema. See Amin Ahmad Razi; *Haft-i-Iqlim*, MS. Punjab University, pp. 540-44.
5. Hamadani deputed his novices in different parts of the valley who established Khanqahs and Madrasas but for the propagation and establishment of Islam viz. Pampore, Bijbehara etc.
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Tawhid (Divine Oneness) in Awrad-i-Fathiyya

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Tawhid (توحيد) is an Arabic word that means "oneness" or "asserting oneness". It is a central principle of Islam that refers to the belief in the oneness and uniqueness of God. Tawhid negates any notion of plurality in His essence, attributes, or actions. Allah is one in His Self, His Attributes and His Actions.

Tawhid is the first tenet from amongst the tenets of Islam, and it is the first fundamental from amongst the fundamentals of Islam and belief. It is the first thing that is binding upon a believer, and it is the first invitation of all the prophets to their respective nations, era after era and age after age.



There is no doubt that the fundamental belief of the religion of Islam, which makes it unique from all other religions, is the belief in Tawhid. Tawhid has the same importance in the religion of Islam as the brain has in the human body. The greatest virtue in Islam is adherence to Tawhid, and the most heinous crime is polytheism.

Explaining the belief in Tawhid, the great scholar of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, Imam Tahawi, writes in his masterpiece '*Al-Aqeedah Al-Tahawiyyah*':

"With the divine certainty, we declare the belief that Allah is one, without any partners. Nothing is like Him. Nothing can debilitate Him. There is no god other than Him. He is the pre-existent without a beginning. He is eternal without end. Neither perishes nor ceases to exist. Nothing will be, except what He wills. Imaginations cannot attain Him, and comprehensions cannot perceive Him. And creations do not bear any similarity to Him. He is alive, never dies, all-sustaining, and never sleeps. He is a creator without any need to create, and He is a provider for His creations without any effort. He seizes life without fear and resurrects without difficulty. Just as He was possessed of His attributes prior to His creation (the existence), so He remains with the same attributes, without any increase in His attributes as a result of His creations coming into being. As He was



before the creation, qualified with His attributes, so He remains forever described by them. It is not after bringing the creation into existence that He merits the name “the Creator”, nor through originating His creations did He gain the name “the Originator”. He possesses the quality of sovereignty with or without a fief and the quality of creativity with or without creation. And while He is “the Resurrector of the Dead” after He resurrects them, He merits the same name before He even resurrects them. Likewise, He merits the name “the Creator” before He even creates them. This is because He is omnipotent over everything. Everything is dependent upon Him, and every affair is effortless for Him, and He needs nothing, and “there is nothing like Him, and He is the Hearer, the Seer.”

The doctrine of Divine Oneness (*tawḥīd*) is the foremost pillar of Islam. When *tawḥīd* is kindled in the heart of a person, the Islamic view of life is validated. The doctrine of *tawḥīd* is based on the negation of all false gods and the affirmation of the one true God. This doctrine ensures the existence, development and survival of the Muslim community, and it serves as a vital force within Islamic society. It was nothing but *taw ḥīd* that instilled unity in the Muslim Umma and made them an unstoppable power.



The Muslim community today has lost this inner flame of certainty, and this loss is the cause of their downfall. What we need in this difficult time is to reawaken the doctrine of *tawḥīd* in our hearts.

'*Aurad Fathiyyah*' is a popular and well-known treatise in Arabic by Shāh-e-Hamadān (may Allah have mercy on him), and it is a collection of supplications that he obtained from about 1400 Sufi masters. He used to recite these '*adhkar*' himself and advised his disciples to recite them as obligatory supplications. It is reported that he also advised the people of Kashmir to recite loudly *Awrad-i-Fathiyya* every day, and this is the reason why a large number of Muslims in Kashmir learn it by heart.

Muhammad Ashraf Wani writes in *Islam in Kashmir*,

“Syed Ali Hamadani compiled *Awrad-i-Fathhiya* especially for Kashmiri Muslims for its loud group recitation so that the habitual hymn singers do not feel to have been spiritually devitalised. While it is true that the congregational recitation of *Awrad* and the singing of *naat* and *manaqib* bordered close to the emotional and demonstrative aspect of the Hindu prayer, which doubtlessly accounted for its wide acceptability and popularity, it is, however, wrong to say that the Sufi

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saints made these innovations in Kashmir to adapt Islam to the local circumstances.”

As a matter of fact, all along its history, the practice of reciting dhikr has had two types of votaries: those who favoured *dhikr-i-khafi* (inward dhikr) and those who approved of *dhikr-i-jahr* (outward dhikr). Syed Ali Hamadani quotes the Prophetic traditions in favour of both and enumerates the specific benefits of each of them. In *Risala Awradiyya*, he regards loud remembrance as good for the following reasons, provided it does not disturb the prayer of others:

- It requires more labour and is, therefore, better, because the more one puts in the labour the better would be the reward.
- It is aimed to benefit others. To help others is a great virtue.
- It awakens the heart of the reciter from the sleep of indolence and forgetfulness.
- The loud remembrance unites heart, mind and ears to understand secret and reality.
- The loudness removes the sleep.
- It increases ebullition of recitation and removes laziness.



- It is expected that others sleeping around would also be induced to worship.
- The recitation of *dhikr* with effervescence (*josh*), yearning and love (*shauq*) creates interest even among those who are in negligence (*ghaflat*).
- It softens the heart of the reciter and enhances his level of humility and submissiveness (*khushu wa khuzu*).
- Reciting the Quran in sweet voice is a *sunnah*.” (*Islam in Kashmir*, p.265)

In most of the mosques and khanqahs Awrad-i-Fathiyya is recited with devotion in the morning. Most of the *adhkar* that are a part of Awrad-i-Fathiyya are derived from Quran and Hadith.

Awrad-i-Fathiyya is not just a book of *adhkar* but it is also a compendium of the '*aqaid*' (beliefs) of the creed of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'h*. The main themes that Shāh-e-Hamadān touches in Awrad-i-Fathiyya are:

The concept of tawhid, requisites of Iman (faith), the pillars of Islam, the importance of Risalah, the love of the rightly guided Caliphs, the love of Ahl-ul-Bayit and the Suhaba etc. He introduced these ideas in an age when people were unaware of the basic principles of Islam and

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they were wandering in the darkness of ignorance. Awwrad-i-Fathiyya can be studied as a valuable treatise on Islamic aqeedah in general but the theme on which Shāh-e-Hamadān has put more emphasis is the creed of Tawhid i.e., monotheism. In Awwrad-i-Fathiyya, he puts forth the never-ending praise and glorification of Allah and His Oneness. The scholars of Islam have divided the concept of Tawhid into many categories and interestingly Awwrad-i-Fathiyya contains adhkar (supplications) that focus on those types of tawhīd.

Most of the scholars have divided Tawhid in five main categories and interestingly Awwrad-i-Fathiyya mentions all of these types.

1. Tawhid Fi Al-'Dhat' (توحيد في الذات)

This means that Allah Almighty is One and He has no partner or equal, no wife, no parents and no children. The oneness of Allah is repeatedly mentioned in Awwrad-i-Fathiyya, in these words:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْجَبَّارُ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْكَرِيمُ السَّتَّارُ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالُ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ خَالِقُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ

(There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah Who is the Sovereign with compelling authority.

There is no God but Allah the One, the Most Supreme.

There is no God but Allah the Powerful, the Forgiving.

There is no God but Allah the Kind the Concealer.

There is no God but Allah the Great, the High.

There is no God but Allah the Creator of night and day.)

At another place, the divine Oneness of God is presented in this way,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ صَاحِبُ الْوَحْدَانِيَّةِ الْفَرْدَانِيَّةِ الْقَدِيمِيَّةِ الْأَزَلِيَّةِ الْأَبَدِيَّةِ لَيْسَ لَهُ
ضَدٌّ وَلَا نِدٌّ وَلَا شَبَهُ وَلَا شَرِيكَ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ حَيٌّ
لَا يَمُوتُ بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

(There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, (Who is) the Embodiment of Oneness, Individuality

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(and) Permanence from the beginning of time (when there was nothing) to eternity when everything will end). There is nothing like Him, and nothing is comparable to him, and nothing can be imagined to be like Him, nor does He have a partner.

There is no God but Allah He is One. He has no partner. The Kingdom is His. All praises are due to Him. He brings to life and He causes death. And He is ever Alive. He is never to die. All good is in His Hands and He has power over all things. And to Him is everybody's return. He is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden and He is aware of everything. Nothing is like unto Him and He listens and sees everything.)

The same theme is further explained in this way:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْأَحَدِ

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْفَرْدِ الصَّمَدِ

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَافِعِ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

(Glory to Allah! The Ever-Eternal Glory to Allah!

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The single, the independent, Glory to Allah! Who holds the heavens without any support? Glory to Allah Who has no wife and no children. Glory to Allah Who neither gave birth nor was born and Who has none equal to Him.)

The divine Oneness is further explained like this,

يَا مَنْ تَقَدَّسَتْ عَنِ الْأَشْبَاهِ ذَاتُهُ وَتَنَزَّهَ عَنْ مُشَابَهَةِ الْأَمْثَالِ صِفَاتُهُ

يَا مَنْ دَلَّتْ عَلَى وَحْدَانِيَّتِهِ آيَاتُهُ وَشَهِدَتْ بِرُبُوبِيَّتِهِ مَصْنُوعَاتُهُ

وَاحِدٌ لَا مِنْ قَلِيلٍ وَمَوْجُودٌ لَا مِنْ عِلَّةٍ ۝

(O the One! Whose identity is the Most Holy, Unparalleled, and whose attributes are perfect and Incomparable.

And O the One about Whom there are signs depicting His Uniqueness, and His creations provide evidence of He being the Almighty.

One without any defect, and existing by Himself without any cause and effect.)

2. Tawhid Fi Al-Sifaat (توحيد في الصفات)

This means that there is no partner in the special attributes of Allah Almighty. In Awwad-i-Fathiyya, more

than one hundred blessed names of Allah Almighty (اسماء الحسنی) are listed in a specific order and each name reveals a specific attribute of Allah. Similarly, along with the repetition of لا اله الا الله, many attributes of Allah have been described as well,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْجَبَّارُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْكَرِيمُ السَّتَّارُ

(There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah Who is the Sovereign with compelling authority.

There is no God but Allah the One, the Most Supreme.

There is no God but Allah the Powerful, the Forgiving.

There is no God but Allah the Kind the Concealer.)

After this, it has been mentioned that nothing resembles Allah,

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

(Nothing can be likened to Him, and He hears and sees everything)



It indicates that Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, has no partner or equal in attributes.

يَا مَنْ هُوَ بِالْبَرِّ مَعْرُوفٌ وَبِالْإِحْسَانِ مَوْصُوفٌ مَعْرُوفٌ بِلَا غَايَةٍ

وَمَوْصُوفٌ بِلَا نِهَآيَةٍ

أَوَّلٌ قَدِيمٌ مَرَبِّ لَا ابْتِدَآءَ لِيَّ

وَأَخِرٌ كَرِيمٌ بِلَا انْتِهَآءَ لِيَّ

عَفَرَ ذُنُوبَ الْمُذْنِبِينَ

كَرَمًا وَجِلْمًا.

(O' the One who is known for His benevolence and renowned for His helpfulness, for which He is limitlessly famous and praised infinitely.

He is the First, The Everlasting without a beginning and the Last and Kind without any end and Who forgives the sins of the sinners out of His generosity and forbearance.)

3. Tawhid Fi Al - Ibadaat (توحيد في العبادات)

This means that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. According to Sharia, worship is a combination of extreme states of love, reverence, and

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fear. Since Allah is the Creator and Owner of the entire universe, He alone is worthy of worship. Therefore, it is Allah's right for His servants to worship Him alone and seek His help.

It is particularly noteworthy that the most repeated 'dhikr' in Awrad-i-Fathiyya is 'Kalima Tayyiba' i.e.,

لا اله الا الله

(There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah)

and it is further substantiated with

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ

(There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and we worship none but Him.)

In Awrad-i-Fathiyya, the seeker of the Truth, the worshipper of God submits his confession in these words,

سُبْحَانَكَ مَا عَبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ

(Glory be to You, (we confess that) we did not worship You to the extent due to You.)

4. Tawheed fi al-Qudrat (توحيد في القدرت)

This means that Allah Almighty is the only true Owner of everything and in authority and power, He has no partner. He alone is capable of doing whatever He wills. He is the creator and destroyer of the universe. He has command on everything that exists. In Awrad-i-Fathiyya, this dua is repeated 10 times presenting Tawheed fi al-Qudrat,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, He is the only One, He has no partner, the kingdom belongs to Him and to Him are due all the praises, and He has the (absolute) power over everything.)

At another place, it is written:

يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ بِقُدْرَتِهِ وَيَحْكُمُ مَا يَرِيدُ بِعِزَّتِهِ إِلَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمْ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

(Allah does whatever He wishes with His authority, and He decrees whatever He desires with His glory, (and) be it known that All things will return to Him, (and) Except Him everything will perish.)

5. Tawheed fi Al Dua (توحيد في الدعاء)

This means that in times of distress, we must seek help only from Allah as He alone has the absolute authority on everything. The great Sufis from different orders always seek help from Allah and advice their disciples to rely on Allah in difficult times. Sultan ul Awliya Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (may Allah have mercy on him) advises his disciples in fifty ninth discourse of *Futuh-ul-Ghaib*, "While in the state of affliction you must not complain to any Allah's creatures , nor display your frustration to anyone...In your distress, you should not go looking to any of His creatures for remedy, because that would account to your associating something with Him...There is no one capable of causing harm, or benefit, of repelling or attracting, of causing sickness and disaster , of healing and restoring , apart from Him."

Following the footsteps of the great Sufis,

Shāh-e-Hamadān (may Allah have mercy on him) also draws our attention to the fact that whenever a believer is caught up in a difficult situation or the ups and downs of life disturb him, he turns only to his Lord and places all his problems before Him and seeks help, because no one has absolute authority except Allah.

Therefore, this is pre-requisite for obtaining success in both the worlds that one should rely on God alone who is the most Generous and the Merciful. In Awrad-i-Fathiyya, he puts forth this dua,

اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ وَلَا رَادَّ لِمَا قَضَيْتَ وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ
مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ

(“O Allah! There is no one who can prevent what You bestow upon us and no one can give us what You disallow. No one can take back what You decree for us, and the wealth of the wealthy is of no avail before You.”)

The following 'dhikr' has been repeated many times in Awrad-i-Fathiyya to show that in all situations we must rely on God.

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ وَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

(Allah alone is sufficient for us and is our best Disposer of affairs, what an excellent Protector and an incredible Helper.)

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَكَفَى اللَّهُ لِمَنْ دَعَا

لَيْسَ وَرَاءَ اللَّهِ الْمُنتَهَى مَنْ اعْتَصَمَ بِاللَّهِ نَجَا

(Allah alone is Sufficient and Enough for us, Allah

listens to whosoever supplicates to Him (for help).

At another place, 'Hasbun Allah' (حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ) has been repeated about fifteen times in this manner,

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ لِيُنْزِلَنَا

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ لِدُنْيَانَا

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ لِمَنْ أَهَمَّنَا

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ لِمَنْ بَغَىٰ عَلَيْنَا

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَسَدَنَا

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ لِمَنْ كَادَنَا بِسُوءٍ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْقَبْرِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْمَسَائِلِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الصِّرَاطِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْحِسَابِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْيُوزَانِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَ الْيَقَاءِ

حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

(Allah is Sufficient for us for our religion.

Allah is Sufficient for us for our world.

Allah is Sufficient for us in anything that may make us sad.

Allah is Sufficient for us against anyone who may trouble us.

Allah is Sufficient for us against enviers.

Allah is Sufficient for us against ill-wishers.

Allah is Sufficient for us on our death.

Allah is Sufficient for us in our grave.

Allah is Sufficient for us when we are questioned.

Allah is Sufficient for us when we have to cross the bridge (of 'sirat').

Allah is Sufficient for us when we have to render the account.

Allah is Sufficient for us when our deeds shall be weighed.

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Allah is Sufficient for us at the time of entry into heaven and hell.

Allah is Sufficient for us when we come to see Him. Allah is Sufficient for me, except Whom none is worthy of worship, upon Him I trust, and to Him I shall return.)

In fact Awrad-i-Fathiyya, at multiple places beautifully represents the Quranic teachings regarding the power and authority of Allah.

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ
يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

(And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him; and if He intends for you good, then there is no repeller of His bounty. He causes it to reach whom He wills of His servants. And He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.)

It is really a great blessing that we Kashmiri Muslims recite Awrad-i-Fathiyya on regular basis and obtain spiritual bliss from it. However, the question that we need to ask ourselves is that how far have we been able to understand it. Have we bothered to ponder over the message of Awrad-i-Fathiyya?

Have we tried to reform ourselves as per the beliefs put forward in Awrad-i-Fathiyya? I'm afraid the answer

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is in negative. It clearly shows that the need of the hour is to understand Awrad-i-Fathiyya and to make it a part of our individual and collective consciousness.

How unfortunate and surprising is this that a nation that was gifted with Awrad-i-Fathiyya, a beautiful treatise on Tawhīd, is still wandering in the darkness upholding un-Islamic actions and innovations. Shāh-e-Hamadān recommended everyone to recite Awrad-i-Fathiyya on regular basis so that we may absorb the basic tenets of Islamic 'aqeedah'.

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The Human Intellect from Sufi Perspective In the Light of Shāh-e-Hamadān's *'Risala Al-Aqliyyah'*

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

Among the Sufis who had the greatest influence on Shāh-e-Hamadān's thought, Imam Ghazali is the most prominent. Be it Zakhirat-ul-Muluk or Minhaj al-Arifin, Risala Khawatriya or Risala Dah Qaida, Risala al-Talqaniyyah or Chahal Maqam-i Sufia, most of Shāh-e-Hamadān's works have the influence of Imam Ghazali's works, such as Ihya Ul Uloom and Kimiya e Saadat, Kitab ul Ilm, Al Mawaiz, Ayyuhal Walad, Nasihat ul

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Muluk, etc. Shāh-e-Hamadān has not only benefitted from his books but has also adopted his writing style in most of his works. As far as *Risala Al-Aqliyyah* is concerned, it is completely derived from a chapter of Ihya Ul-Uloom named 'Ajaibi al-Aql wa Al Qalb'. At some places, he has directly copied the sentences from the book by Imam Ghazali. *Risala Al-Aqliyyah* is a treatise on the reality of human intellect, its virtues and other related issues in a logical sequence. Shah-i-Hamadan Hamadan compares the notions of philosophers and mystics regarding the human faculty of perception (Aql) and gives approval to the idea of the Sufis. Who are of the view that Aql has limited powers, but it is essential in receiving guidance (hidayah) and wisdom (hikmah), both of which spring from the same fountainhead? A wrong impression is usually given about the Sufis that they oppose reason and rationality. Even Sufism as a whole is sometimes taken as a philosophy or a way of life opposed to rationality. However, that is not the case; Sufis give an appropriate place to reason but also know its limitations. Dealing with metaphysical pursuits doesn't mean that the role of rational understanding is to be undermined. In this treatise, *Risala Al-Aqliyyah*, Shāh-e-Hamadān disapproves of these accusations and proves that the intellect has an essential place in all things. According to



him, it is due to the advanced rational faculty that man is called the crown of creation and has been appointed as 'khalifa', i.e., the vicegerent of God. According to him, God created man, and man has been blessed with the qualities of intellect, perception, understanding and intuition. In mediaeval times, it was generally believed that the human mind is responsible for thinking, whereas feelings, emotions and intuitions arise from the human heart. But in those times, Shah-i-Hamadan amazingly comes up with the notion that the words like soul (Ruh), heart (Qalb), and self (Nafs) are used for the single faculty and there is no dichotomy. He quotes from the Sufi exegete Sahl bin Abdullah Tustri:

"Aql (Intellect) has a thousand names, and each name has another thousand names." (1)

Risala Al-Aqliyyah consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, the superiority of intellect is proved by quoting the Qur'anic verses, the hadiths of the Prophet, and the traces of the companions and their followers. This gives a subtle hint that Shāh-e-Hamadān considers the 'nusus' (proofs) of Shariyah to be superior to intellect. The intellect is to be kept subordinate to the rulings of the Quran and Sunnah. He quotes four verses of the Holy Quran which encourage rational understanding and critical thinking.

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إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

(Al-Imran 190)

Indeed, the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.

Afterwards, he quotes seventeen *ahadith* of the Prophet (ﷺ) clarifying the importance of intellect for the worldly and spiritual life of an individual.

He begins with the *hadith* narrated by Umar Bin Al Khattab (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"Man has not acquired anything like intellect that guides him and saves him from error. Unless intellect is perfect, man's faith and steadfastness in religion are not guaranteed." (2)

This shows the fallacy of the popular notion that reason is antithetical to religion. Shāh-e-Hamadān values the intellect but at the same time imposes the condition that it should be subject to the 'nusus' of the Shariyah. When the intellect plays its role by remaining subordinate to the Shariyah, it uplifts the human soul towards advancement in all spheres of life. However, the reason should never be left unbridled; it needs the



guidance of revelation at every stage. Intellect is the power by which man knows, learns to distinguish and realises things. Reason cannot perceive the metaphysical realms, and it has no option but to follow the revelation (Wahi), which is an institution opened by God and gifted to the Prophets, who tell us about the unseen facts like heaven, hell, Paradise, barzakh, angels, etc. These things are beyond human perception.

In the second chapter of the treatise, Shāh-e-Hamadān discusses the names and attributes of intellect and shows the difference of opinion between philosophers and mystics about the intellect. According to philosophers, Aql is the faculty of perception, whereas the mystics take it as a means of attaining guidance (hidayah) and wisdom (hikmah). According to philosophers, there are nine different names of Aql, defining and suggesting different roles it plays.

1. Aql I Nazari
2. Aql I Muktasib
3. Aql I Huolayi
4. Aql I Amali
5. Aqli Mustafad
6. Aql I Munfaal

7. Aql I Faal

8. Aql I Kul

9. Aql I Mafariq

There are many traditions regarding what was created by first by God. In some traditions, it is mentioned that first God created the pen. In other traditions, it is mentioned that 'Aql' (Intellect), Ruh (Spirit) and Noor (Light) were created first. In this context, Shāh-e-Hamadān, reconciling the traditions states that actually pen, soul and light are different names of one and the same thing I.e., the human intellect (Aql), this shows his mastery on the understanding of hadith (dirayat-i-hadith). He writes,

“By consulting intuition, Shariah and rational sciences, it is quite clear that only one thing was created at first. Contrary to this, the traditions mention multiple things which is not possible. Actually, these are different attributes of the same thing (Aql) and it is not necessary to take them as different entities.” (3)

So, all these are different attribute names of intellect (Aql) and point to the same reality.

Sheikh Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi states in Al-Tadbirat al-Illahiyya that in the state of human

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existence, Aql i.e., the reason holds the position of Prime Minister in the same way Shāh-e-Hamadān also gives Prime importance to it. He writes,

"In the universal kingdom, that is, in the planning of spiritual matters, the disposition and the causes of worldly purposes, and in the causes of the destiny, all issues are entrusted to the intellect (Aql)." (4)

The best result of giving intellect its rightful place is that man is equipping himself with various scientific, industrial and cultural resources and inventions and is on the path of development.

In the third chapter of Risala Aqliyyah, Shāh-e-Hamadān presents his analysis by mentioning the ranks of people in acquiring knowledge. According to him, intellect is not something that we get at the time of birth, but a person has to strive for it. At this point, he begins with this verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"And those who strive in Our way, We will surely guide them to our paths" (Al Ankabut :69)

According to him, it is essential to strike a balance between the physical and spiritual aspect of the intellect (Aql) and this is what has been described as 'Aqli Saleem' in the Holy Quran. Syedina Ali says: "Aql (Intellect) is of two types, natural and auditory. The

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auditory intellect gathers information by listening to the people. If someone is deprived of intellect by birth, the auditory intellect is of no use to him just like sunlight is of no use to the blind. (5)

Imam Raghīb Isfahani writes:

“Al-Aql refers to the power that is always ready to receive knowledge and the knowledge that is obtained through this power is also called Aql, as Imam Ghazali writes in *Ihya Ul-Uloom*:

“And the intellect is the source of knowledge. Knowledge springs from the intellect in the same way as fruits from the tree, light from the sun and vision from the eye, so how can the intellect be undermined as it is the means of satisfaction in both the two worlds. How can It's essential role be doubted.” (6)

According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, as vision is related to the eye, so is the intellect related to the knowledge. If someone uses it for the praise of Allah and for the praise of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), it is just like the combination of the sunlight and the eyesight. For vision the two are interdependent so we cannot attain satisfaction without reconciling and balancing the two. (7)



In science, the importance is given to the empirical understanding of things and this scientific methodology adapted by the west has yielded great fruits in the form of numerous inventions and discoveries. In this context, Shah-i-Hamadan highlights the importance of experimentation and pragmatic understanding of the things and says that with the help of extensive experimentation the beneficial knowledge can be acquired because everyone faces hardships in life and in this regard, all are tested. These tests make us strong and they sharpen our intellect and we are able to fight against these trials and tribulations with a great courage. (8)

According to Shāh-e-Hamadān, whatever good in life we achieve, it is due to the intellect. but at the same time, it should be kept under the instructions of the Shariyah. He quotes this hadith in which Abu Darda reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Enhance your intellect, it will bring you closer to the Lord.”

Abu Darda responded, “How can I do it”?

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied,

“Beware of the prohibitions of Allah, follow the commandments, you will become wise, do righteous

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deeds, you will gain honour and glory in this world and nearness and honour to Allah Almighty." (9)

In the end, Shāh-e-Hamadān also points out that some facts are beyond reason and understanding, and then he infers from this hadith of the Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace:

“If you know what I know, you will laugh less and cry more.”

At the same time, he advises to give preference to faith over reason and avoid philosophers and theorists and focus on the Quran and Sunnah. (10)

Like the philosophers, the Sufis also categorise the intellect in nine types,

1. Ruh
2. Qalb
3. Nafs
4. Nur
5. Loah
6. Qalam
7. Ruhi Nabawi
8. Ruh I Qudsi (11)



According to Shah-i-Hamadan, indulgence in philosophical and logical discussions is a wastage of time and it hardens the heart of an individual. Criticising the materialistic scholars, he says that if you honestly look at the materialistic scholars of this age, you will find out that most of them follow their propensities and unbridled desires. The worldly pomp and show has made them to forget God and they shall be among the losers on the day of judgment.

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.” (Al Quran 28:83)

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8. Ibid: p.100
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10. Ibid: p. 105 is binding upon a believer, and it is the first invitation of all the prophets to their respective nations, era after era and age after age.



The Creed of Spiritual Manhood (Futuwwah) and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

In Persian, the word 'futuwwat' (فتوت) means manliness, generosity, chivalry and knightliness. According to Dawud Walid, "Futuwwah linguistically derives from 'fa-ti-ya', meaning to be youthful." (1) This is conveyed operationally when Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated, 'None of you should call anyone "my slave", for all of you are slaves of Allah. Instead say, "my youngster" ... "my fata". In the Holy Quran, the word 'Fata' is used for Yusuf (AS) and 'fityah' for the Ashab-i-Kahaf, the youth who left everything for the sake of Allah and took refuge in a cave. Actually, the word futuwwah has spiritual connotations, and it is widely used by Sufis for a

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particular band of saliks (the seekers of the Truth).

Futuwwah is loosely translated as 'spiritual chivalry'. It can also be defined as characteristics of a distinguished gentleman or a knight who displays courage, honour, courtesy, justice, and a readiness to help the weak. Not only does the term have a shade of elusiveness in giving it one rigid definition, but there are also differences of opinion as to when the term came into usage among the Arabs. In essence, futuwwah is the outward exemplification of an inward code of honour. Those raised on the path of futuwwah are guided to selflessness rather than self-absorption, courage in the face of immorality (as well as imminent threats to physical safety) rather than cowardice, distaste of harm coming to anyone, and disdain of revelling in the misfortunes of others – including adversaries. The term is also applied to the moral and spiritual development of an individual and to attain intellectual maturity. Futuwwah is a band of Sufis loosely bound together for helpless social service. It is a trend in which prominence is given to the service and welfare of mankind.

Almost all the trends of Futuwwah are generally attributed to Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (RA), and in his obedience a large group of Sufis adopted Futuwwah as a practice, including Shaykh Abu Hamid Ahmad

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Khizriyah, Shaykh Umar Bin Salma Haddad Neshapuri, Sheikh Alaw-ud-Dawlah Simnani, Sheikh Ashraf Jahangir Samnani and Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadāni. In the Kubarawi Sufi order, the word is used for generosity and spiritual brotherhood. The disciples were not only taught various remembrances, but they were also trained for the selfless social service. A special watch was kept on their manners and etiquettes. The associates of the Kubarawi Khanqahs would address one another as 'Akhi', meaning O brother. Shāh-e-Hamadān writes in 'Fatwatiya',

“It is mandatory for an 'Akhi' that he should be having spiritual allegiance (bayah) in the Futuwwat Sufi order that spiritually connects him with Hazrat Ali (RA); otherwise, his claims are baseless.” 2

Futuwwah is a way of guidance in Sufism in which all human virtues and moral excellence must be attained. Futuwwah is a component of 'Faqr' and a part of 'Wilayah'. Futuwwah is the path of cultivating strong youth. Strength is not merely an aspect of physicality but arises from virtuous qualities that are exemplified in individual behaviour and fortified through organised brotherhood. It is narrated that Hasan al-Basri said,

'The conglomeration of futuwwah is in the Holy Qur'an [16:90]:



"Surely Allah enjoins justice and goodness, giving to close kin, and prohibits immorality, evil and rebellion. He admonishes you in order that you may be heedful."

The Mother of the Believers, 'A'ishah (RA), reports that the father of futuwwah, Hazrat 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, once said,

"The best traits of the 'fata' are courage and generosity, and both of these come together in the generous valiant one." 3

Ma'ruf al-Karkhi said,

'The signs of the fityan are three: loyalty without breaching it, giving without being asked, and praising without being shown generosity.'

Sheikh Sahl ibn 'Abdullah al-Tustari said,

'Futuwwah is following the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).'

Many Sufis have written dedicated books on the subject of futuwwah, including Shaykh Al-Sulami's Kitab Al-Futwat, Alaadu Daulah Simnani's Risalat Fi Fatwat, and Shahabuddin Suhrawardi's Kitab Al-Fatwat. Shaykh Al-Sulami was the first to write a book on this topic in the 4th century Hijri. Other scholars like Imam Qusheyri, Ibn Jawzi, and Ibn ul Qayyim have also written on this subject.



Being 'Ali Thani' (The Second Ali), Mir Syed Ali Hamadani carried forward the legacy of Futuwwah to all the lands that he visited and practically revived the spiritual manhood among his disciples. He wrote a dedicated booklet on the subject titled "Fatuwatiya", which is a very attractive and interesting book in terms of its relevance and subject matter. This book is a practical spiritual manual for the disciples, making them conscious about real manhood and motivating them for selfless social service. In a letter written to the ruler Muhammad Shah, Syed Ali Hamadani divides worship into two parts:

1. *Al-Tazeem Li Amr i Allah*: Showing respect and reverence to the orders of God and complying them

2. *Al Shafqata Ala Khalq i Allah*: Showing compassion for the creation of God and taking care of it

In the first part, he mentions, all physical acts of worship such as prayer and fasting, financial acts of worship such as Zakat and Fitrah, and both physical and financial acts of worship such as Hajj and Jihad, while in the second part he mentions, all acts of charity and social welfare. 4

In his book, Shāh-e-Hamadān considers Fatuwat and Sufism as one (5). As Futuwwah usually deals with



etiquettes and manners and many Sufi masters define Sufism as the beautification of morals and etiquettes. Sheikh Abu Muhammad Jurairi once said, "Sufism is to inculcate good manners and the elimination of bad manners for the sake of Allah. " Maulana Muhammad Ali Lahori says, " Sufism is to please God with worship, the Prophet (ﷺ) with obedience and the people with service." 4. Sufism is the spiritual connection with God and Futuwwah is it's practical manifestation in the people and hence the two are the two sides of the same coin. Shah-i-Hamadan quotes Sheikh Fudhail Bin Ayyadh saying,

"Futuwwah is to spend one's wealth in the way of God, helping both believers and unbelievers. Taking advantage of the example of God's forgiveness and generosity, one should bless everyone, believers and unbelievers, friends and enemies." 6

Futuwwah generally deals with 'huquq ul ibad', i.e., the rights of people upon one another.

Shah-i-Hamadan writes in his book:

“In the light of the above definitions, it can be seen that the etiquettes and characteristics of futuwwut are mostly related to the rights of the servants and in this sense it becomes a school of practical ethics. The

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Prophet (ﷺ) has said, “when a believer is busy in fulfilling the needs of his brother, Allah responds to his needs. According to a hadith, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) once said, “All creation is the family of God and the beloved of God is the one who benefits His family the most.” So, it is proven that there is a strong emphasis on fulfilling the rights of the servants of God...” If you are [politically or socially], powerful try to serve and comfort the servants of God as much as possible." 7

He further writes,

"Although there are many attributes of futuwwah, all the attributes are based on four elements which are the essence of it. These four attributes have been described by Hazrat Ali (RA) in these words:

1. Forgiving while being in power
2. Being patient when in anger
3. Doing good to the enemy [by showing compassion]
4. Self-sacrifice for others despite being in need.

It means that futuwwah is worship of God. And that is why the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), said that all people are the family of God, and the most beloved person to Him is the one who benefits His family. 'Akhi' is



someone having high morals and is blessed with desirable traits. 'Akhi' respects the elderly, treats the young with care, shows compassion to children, treats the weak with kindness and helps the poor with generosity. He respects the scholars, shows contempt to the oppressors and the wicked and treats the people with benevolence. He shows humility before the truth, strives against his desires, reconciles people, detests greed and wages a war against the Satan. 8

In this treatise, Shah-i-Hamadan emphasizes the importance of Muslim unity and quotes this hadith of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ),

"A faithful believer to a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other." (Bukhari 481)

It clearly shows that Muslim brotherhood is an essential part of Futuwwah and sectarianism can not be allowed in a Muslim society.

He further says that he has written this booklet in response to a request by a brother in faith 'akhi' Touti Ali Shah of Khatlan (Tajikistan). Then, he describes his spiritual chain of futuwwah in detail. He mentions that he wore the garb (khirqa) of Futuwwah from Muhammad Azkani and this chain goes all the way to Hazrat Ali (RA) through Kumayl Bin Ziyad and Hazrat Ali (RA) got it from Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). 9



In this treatise, Shah-i-Hamadan has tried to motivate his disciples to play a significant role in the society by contributing with their sincere efforts. He has set a road map for all kinds of social service and links it with spirituality. The lives of Sufi saints are always devoted to the service of the people. If a Sufi sees someone in pain, his heart aches, if he finds someone hungry, he provides him something to eat. He becomes restless by seeing the destitute, and tries to offer a helping hand. If he finds someone sick, he would take all possible measures to ensure that he is treated well.

In the present times, the revival of futuwwah is the need of the hour as futuwwah is the path of cultivating a strong youth. In this digital age, the biggest issues faced by the youth of today are, loss of morality, depression, sexual frustration, drug addiction, bullying and social mal-adjustment. There is an unprecedented increase in the cases of suicide, violence, drug-addiction, cybercrime, maladjustment and immorality. In this situation futuwwah gives a positive direction to the youth. They are made physically, intellectually and spiritually strong individuals by spiritual counseling and then the mentor infuses in them a strong purpose of living for others. They are spiritually motivated to serve the other fellow beings and derive satisfaction from it.



If fully understood and followed, Futuwwah can bring a great revolution in the society by giving a right direction to the talented Muslim youth.

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The Educational Perspective of Shāh-e-Hamadān

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

In the present era, the importance of education has increased so much that a modern society cannot be imagined without it. The greatness that man has achieved today in the scientific, social, economic and political fields are all the blessings of education. Education is essential for the socio-economic development of every nation, and it opens the doors of progress. It is a known fact that education has the power to change a person's entire life. Learning changes thinking capabilities and perceptions. Teaching and learning helps break preconceived notions. The function of education is to think better and critically and help develop a perspective and opinion towards life. Education alone can empower a person in a real sense. It



is through education that the work of human development is carried out, the coming generations are prepared, their role in society is determined and the process of progressing on the path of development is brought to perfection. Hijab Khatoon has rightly pointed out in her paper titled as

'Educational Status of Muslims in India : Problems and Prospects', "Education plays a crucial role in determining the socio-economic development of a nation. It leads to the upliftment and transformation of society by empowering the marginalised and excluded sections to have better control over their lives and life conditions by providing them with skills and the necessary qualifications to face life's challenges and change them for the better. Education has extraordinary power to lift communities from poverty, inertia and hopelessness. A truly educated population is an asset for any community because educated individuals are more productive, innovative, and adaptive and can contribute significantly to the growth and development of their families, community and the nation. Those who are better equipped with education have low levels of poverty and high standards of living because there is a deep interlinkage between high levels of education, better employment opportunities and overall economic advancement."



In every era, human society has different needs, and these needs are kept in mind in determining priorities. These needs and priorities are given a key position in formulating the education system. The Quran and Hadith have given immense importance to knowledge, education and learning and have even presented the concept of compulsory education for every person. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself established educational institutions and even arranged for residential and non-residential, part-time and full-time, night and travelling education. Islam has encouraged education for every class, whether male or female, adult or minor, and it also looks at every beneficial knowledge with admiration, whether it is religious and moral education or technical and scientific education or the teaching of a language. The effect of Islam's encouragement in the field of knowledge was that Muslims established a formal system of *madrasas* and permanent schools in the very early period, libraries came into existence, and Muslims showed such activity in the field of research and science that they achieved great achievements in various fields of knowledge and research and gave rise to many inventions. As long as Muslims remained connected with education, they dominated the intellectual and practical scene of the world, but as soon as they neglected education, they fell



victim to degradation in every respect. That is why our biggest priority in getting out of the current degradation should be education. Our main focus as an 'Ummah' should be making an educational system which may provide knowledgeable, skilled and pious students. The great scholar and polymath Imam Ghazali, expounding the importance of knowledge, quotes from Muadh Bin Jabal (RA).

"Acquire knowledge, for indeed learning is out of Allah's Fearingness, seeking after it is out of service, studying it is out of Exaltation (of Allah), searching for it is out of *Jihad*, teaching it to one who is ignorant is out of charity, and giving it to its proper men is out of approach (towards Allah Almighty). It [knowledge] is the entertainer when one is alone, the companion when one is in seclusion, the right guide to the religion, the one which helps one keep patient in both prosperity and adversity, the consultant among the friends, and the relative which unites the strangers. It is also the lighting guide of the way to the garden; therewith Allah Almighty raises up a people and makes them take the positions of leaders and chiefs in goodness, guides to be followed by others, and drivers towards good, to be traced and observed for their deeds. The angels have desire for their companionship, and their wings – they touch them [out of respect], and everything, be it living



or solid, including even the whale and animals in the ocean, the wild and domestic animals of the land and the heaven with its stars, asks for [Allah's] forgiveness for them." (*Ihya-ul-Uloom*)

The prevalent educational system in India encompasses pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education. It is characterised by a diverse range of educational boards and institutions, including government and private schools, and focuses on both academic and vocational education. The Muslim educational system historically involves *Maktab*s for primary education and Madrasas for higher learning, and they are often linked to mosques and other seminaries. These institutions focus on religious studies like the Quran and Islamic jurisprudence, alongside some secular subjects. While *madrasas* traditionally emphasise religious education, they are yet to evolve to include more secular subjects and mainstream curriculums for combating contemporary challenges. The curriculum in most of these institutions is outdated and it does not facilitate the pass-outs to integrate with the formal educational system of the country. There is still a huge gap between the two systems. The result of not synchronising with the current times has put the Muslims on the back stage in almost all the fields of life. Though Muslims have a well-developed system of



madrasa education as well as access to all government and private schools and universities, they are the least educated section of Indian society. In the field of science and technology, we are yet to equip ourselves with twenty-first-century skills.

We have not been able to foster a younger generation who can play an active role in the process of nation-building. The literacy and unemployment rates of Muslims are still below the overall rates in the country. Hence, it is the need of the hour to have a special focus on education. If we wish to forge ahead, we need to strike a balance between religious and secular education and integrate them in such a way that they become an organic whole.

In this scenario the multi-dimensional and myriad-minded personalities like Shāh-e-Hamadān Mir Syed Ali Hamadani may serve as a beacon of light who take education as an organic whole and as an effective tool of social change. Shāh-e-Hamadān was mostly influenced by Imam Ghazali, who divides knowledge into four categories.

1. Prophetic
2. Rulers
3. Philosophers
4. Preachers



Shāh-e-Hamadān dedicated many books for these categories. The books like *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, *Risala Aetiqaadiya*, and *Rawdhat-ul-Firdous* are loaded with prophetic knowledge. *Zakhirat-ul-Muluk*, *Maktubat* and *Aqabat* are on the education of the ruling class. The books like *Insan-i-Kamil*, *Wujudiyya*, *Aqaliyya*, *Hall-ul-Fusus*, etc., are on philosophical ideas and *Fi Ulama-e-Deen*, *Minhaj-ul-Arifeen*, *Mirat-ul-Tayibeen*, and *Muash-ul-Salikeen* are about the issues that are highly valuable to the preachers of Islam. Shāh-e-Hamadān himself was a polymath and hence encouraged achieving excellence in social, religious, political and philosophical domains. According to him, knowledge is of two types,

- Useful knowledge that includes religious and worldly knowledge
- Useless knowledge that includes magic and astrology

He advocates for following the former unconditionally and adopting a cautious approach regarding the latter. Shāh-e-Hamadān was well-versed in religious sciences, politics, ethics, economics, philosophy, literature, face-reading, etc., at the same time, and it suggests that he gave proper importance to each of them. For him, the aim of education is based on



the Islamic ideology, and everything is to be viewed from this perspective. The main function of education is the character-building of an individual so that he/she can differentiate between good and evil. Hence, the religious and moral standpoint determines the entire educational philosophy. If a curriculum is derived from his works, it would be in accordance with the teachings of Islam. In his perspective, along with religious education, it is important to include worldly knowledge as well. As far as prioritisation is concerned, it is left only to the interests and opinions of the teachers, as they are fully aware of their times.

Shāh-e-Hamadān 's views on education may be summed up in these points.

1. The main objective of education is to lead human beings towards the consciousness of the Creator in order to obey His commands.

2. According to him, the focus of education should not be just on acquiring knowledge but also on *tarbiyah* (personality development) and *suhbah* (companionship of the pious).

3. Multidisciplinary education would be another important feature of his educational philosophy, as he himself was a polymath with multiple preoccupations.

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The main feature of his worldview has been 'myriad-mindedness'. He has profusely written on diverse themes like religion, science, ethics, polity, economy, philosophy and literature. The books like *Risala Aqliyya*, *Farastanama*, *Insan Nama*, *Risala Hifzan-e-Sehat*, and *Adaab Safra* show his deep commitment to rational sciences.

4. Shah-i-Hamadan's emphasis would be on skill-based education. Education should make a person self-reliant. In his book *Muash-ul-Salikeen*, he lays emphasis on earning lawfully. His 700 comrades were well equipped with many kinds of skills, which helped them to make a good living in an alien land. They not only earned respect there but also turned that land [Kashmir] into Iran-i-Sagheer.

5. Shāh-e-Hamadān himself was a product of the Khanqhi educational system that focuses on spirituality and austerity. Hence, residential education would be encouraged by him, as it gives an opportunity to cut oneself off from worldly temptations and imposes a strict moral discipline to enable the students to remain focused on their goal. Modification of behaviour and intellectual development of the learners was ensured by the *Shaikh* in his *Khanqah*.

Dr Shamsuddin Ahmed writes:

"Mir Syed Ali Hamdani facilitated [for his followers] a moderate and practicable training to adhere to a systematic moral law which was based on a moderation between body and soul; that is, apart from spiritual training, they were also given physical training. What he did was fruitful, and in this physical labour, he also exposed them to various necessary arts and crafts so that in the future, in numerous individual and collective missionary journeys, there would be no gaps in the collective service of religion. They were made familiar with the arts and skills of horse riding, swimming, martial arts, eloquence, studying books, calligraphy, architecture, medicine and agriculture."

6. Physical education is also important, according to him, as it makes a person physically and mentally fit. Physical education is essential for better health and

It develops a wide range of skills and the ability to use tactics, strategies, and compositional ideas to perform successfully.

Physical education helps students develop lasting personal and social skills. They work as individuals, in groups and in teams, developing concepts of fairness and of personal and social responsibility. They take on



different roles and responsibilities, including leadership. They learn the values of diligence, justice and teamsmanship. Emphasising physical exercise and travel, Shāh-e-Hamadān writes in *Rasala Hifzan-e-Sehat*,

"There are great health benefits in moving, running and carrying loads... In these matters, one should follow those who are fully accustomed to these practices. The activities, like walking long distances and archery, etc., are also highly beneficial."

7. Training individuals for selfless social service is also an important feature of Shah-i-Hamadan's perspective on education. Social services generally place a high value on keeping communities together and organising support for one another. These include child, youth and elderly welfare and taking care of the sick, disabled and destitute. Shāh-e-Hamadān, through his ethical philosophy as derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, motivates his followers to dedicate themselves to the general welfare of the people. His allegiance to the '*Futuwwah*' (the spiritual manhood) automatically makes him an ardent advocate of voluntary social service. He writes in '*Fatwatiyya*'.

"If you are [politically or socially] powerful, try to serve and comfort the servants of God as much as



possible... Although there are many attributes of *futuwwah*, all the attributes are based on four elements which are the essence of it. These four attributes have been described by Hazrat Ali (RA) in these words:

1. Forgiving while being in power
2. Being patient when in anger
3. Doing good to the enemy [by showing compassion]
4. Self-sacrifice for others despite being in need.

It means that *futuwwah* is worship of God. And that is why the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that all people are the family of God, and the most beloved person to Him is the one who benefits His family.”

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The Historical and Cultural Importance of Khanqah-i-Moalla

Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen

"*Khanqah*" refers to a Sufi lodge or monastery, used for gatherings and spiritual practice by Sufi brotherhoods. It can also serve as a hospice for Sufi travellers and Islamic students. In Persian, "*khan*" means elderly or chief, and "*qah*" means "place". Hence, Khanqah is a place where an elderly Sufi sheikh resides to give spiritual blessings to the seekers of the Truth. Munshi Abdul Rahman writes that Khanqah is a place where the values of self-purification and moral education are inculcated. (1)

As far as Shah Hamdan is concerned, he considers *Khanqah* as a spiritual training school meant for the holistic development of a disciple. He was himself a



product of *the Khanqahi* system of spiritual education, as he attained spiritual maturity from the *Khanqah* of his Sheikh, Mehmood Muzdqani. Keeping in view the social and reformatory function of *Khanqahs*, Shah e Hamadan himself constructed many such institutions to promote spiritual enlightenment and social reform. It is significant to mention here that the doors of the *Khanqah* are always open to all, irrespective of their caste, creed and social status.

During his stay in Kashmir, he reached most of the towns of Kashmir in connection with the preaching of Islamic values. In some of these towns and villages, later his son Mir Muhammad Hamadani built *Khanqahs*, and most of the people of Kashmir consider them the *Khanqahs* of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. Mostly Mir Syed Ali Hamdani stayed in the then official guesthouse at the site of the present *Khanqah-i-Moalla* in Alauddin Pura, which was later demolished by Sultan Qutbuddin, the king of Kashmir, and set up a raised platform for offering prayers where Syed Ali Hamdani, Sultan Qutbuddin, and others used to perform the five obligatory prayers. Later, Mir Muhammad Hamdani, the son of Mir Syed Ali Hamdani, built a *Khanqah* on this site. Except this raised platform (*suffa*), Syed Ali Hamadani himself didn't build any *Khanqah*. (2)



With his efforts, Mir Muhammad Hamadani built many Khanqahs at different places like Srinagar, Tral, Pampore, Wachi, Monghama, etc. However, Khanqah-i-Mualla has a special place in the Khanqahs of Kashmir, as it is one of the oldest mosques of the valley, and it has incredible cultural importance in the region.

Dr Gulzar Mufti writes in his book *Shah-i-Hamdan & Khanqah-i-Moalla*,

"Khanqah-i-Mualla is the most revered Khanqah in the world. It is not only a place of worship for Kashmiris but also represents more than six hundred years of our heritage." (3)

Located in the middle of the city of Srinagar on the eastern bank of the river Jhelum, this Khanqah is of extraordinary importance in view of its historical, cultural and spiritual importance. Thousands of people from different regions come here throughout the year regardless of religion and nationality and find spiritual peace. Here the seekers of gnosis receive resplendent provisions and are blessed with peace and serenity. This is the special mosque of Shah e Hamadan, which acted as the centre of the propagation of Islam. Acknowledging its importance, with the motivation of Mir Muhammad Hamadani, Sultan Sikandar ordered the construction of this Khanqah in order to commemorate the role of Shah



e Hamadan in the establishment of Islam in Kashmir. The land adjacent to this site was bought from its owners, and in order to meet its expenses permanently, the *jagir* of three villages (Vachi, Nunwani and Tral) was bought from Sultan Sikandar as a *waqf*; in return, he was given a rare gem of Badakhshan by Muhammad Hamadani. The documental record of this deed is preserved even today. The construction work for this project started in 1396 AD (798 AH), and it was completed in 1397 AD (799 AH). It is reported that the patron saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Nuruddin Noorani, also manually worked during its construction.

After the construction was completed, it was converted into a spiritual training centre; meditation circles were established here; the era of knowledge and mysticism started; it became a shelter for travellers and the needy, and a *langarkhana* for the hungry. An administrative body was constituted for its maintenance, and *Imam*, *Muazin*, *Awrad Khwan*, *Fatiha Khwan*, *Farash*, *Chiraghi*, etc., were appointed. Shah e Hamdan had brought some valuable books with him while coming to Kashmir; Syed Muhammad Qadhi was appointed as the librarian. After his death, this post was offered to Mulla Ahmad, who took the best care of it. The mystics and scholars of the time would benefit from this library. Eighty years after its construction, during the



reign of Hasan Shah Shahmiri, the building of Khanqah-i-Mualla suffered a lot of damage in a fire accident, and the holy relics (*Tabarukat*) were saved with great difficulty. After this incident, the Sultan rebuilt it in 1480 AD (885 AH).

During the reign of Sultan Ghazi Chak, the Khanqah was again damaged in a fire incident, and the Sultan's sister Saleha Mouji sold her personal jewellery, received as a dower (*mehr*), and initiated its reconstruction. The two-storeyed structure was erected by her efforts and dedicated to the lovers of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani.

Almost two hundred years after this event, during the Mughal era in 1731 AD (1144 AH), the building was again severely damaged in a fire accident, and Subedar Nawab Abul Barakat Khan took prompt action to rebuild it in 1734 AD (1146 AH). During the Afghan rule in 1795 AD (1207 AH), Subedar Mir Hazar Khan had some parts of *Awrad-i-Fathiya* and *Kibrit-i-Ahmar* inscribed on its walls. (4)

During the Sikh rule (1819-1846), the commander Foula Singh, on the provocation of some miscreants and on the basis of a misunderstanding, showed intention of destroying it. When the people came to know about it, they protested against him, and hence his plans were thwarted by clarifying the misconceptions. (5)



As a result of the devastating floods of 2014, the building and its foundation were severely damaged, the wooden pillars also got weakened, and some repairmen's work was initiated.

Describing the architecture and cultural importance of Khanqah-i-Mualla, Dr Gulzar Mufti writes,

"The architecture of the Khanqah is distinctly Central Asian, with wood, sculpted stones and small bricks used as the building materials. It is a timber-framed superstructure built on a stony foundation and plinth. Dressed brick tiles have been used as the infill. Deodar (cedar) wood has been abundantly employed for support as well as for aesthetics with arched window frames and delicately carved wooden-latticed structures and beautifully chiselled eaves. The woodwork is a superb example of traditional craftsmanship of the bygone era.

The main entrance is on the eastern face of the mosque. Once inside, the visitor's mind is gripped by an overwhelming aura of peace and tranquillity. The high ceiling, the richly carved and painted wooden walls, and the hanging antique chandeliers impart an air of magnificence. The impression imparted is that of a rapid journey through time, with its three dimensions – the past, the present and the future – that seem to blend



seamlessly into one. That is hardly surprising, since numerous pious people, saints and individuals of good deeds prayed and meditated at this very place and found inspiration and enlightenment. A number of them left behind a wealth of literary material, some of which is recited regularly inside the Khanqah and at various other functions across the Kashmir Valley.

The inside of the mosque is an archaeological masterpiece, with Arabic inscriptions embossed on the walls. The main prayer hall is rectangular in shape with four substantial pillars standing impressively in the middle. Rows of small rooms – seven on each wall – flank the northern and southern walls of the mosque. In the olden times these were the residences as well as places of meditation and worship for virtuous men of the time. Even today good men use these rooms for *Aytikaf*, particularly during the month of Ramadan. The room at the far end of the northern wall is called the *Hujra Khaas* (The Special Chamber). This is where Shah-i-Hamadan used to pray and meditate. Just outside it is an enclosed space that houses a special tall cupboard which holds the tent pole and the standard of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). These holy relics were handed over to Shah-i-Hamadan by Shiekh Mohammed Azkani and were brought to Kashmir from Pakhli after the death of Shah-i-Hamadan by a gentleman named Ludi Magray.



Noor Khaana (The home of light) is the room outside the Hujra Khas on the northwestern aspect of the Khanaqah. It can be approached from the riverside and is the place where Shah-i-Hamadan's followers and companions used to sit and listen to his discourses.

Just after entering the prayer hall near the two corners of the eastern wall, two narrow and steep staircases, one on each side, lead up to two seating areas. These are used to accommodate the overflow of worshippers on special Islamic occasions like Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha & Lailat-ul-Qadr. Both these areas are connected to large outside balconies through small doors.

The inside and outside of the Khanqah are packed to capacity during the first six days of Dhul-Hijjah (last month of the Hijri calendar) by people from all corners of Kashmir Valley. The largest gathering is on the night of the 5th and during the 6th Dhul-Hijjah, which is the death anniversary of the learnt Sayyid. In Kashmir the day is known as *Urs-i-Shah-i-Hamadan*.

The foundation and the stone plinth of the Khanqah were laid by Shah-i-Hamadan, but the task of building was undertaken after Shah-i-Hamadan's death by his illustrious son Mir Sayyid Mohammed Hamadani when he visited Kashmir at the close of the 8th century (AH),

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during the reign of Sultan Sikandar Shah, son of Sultan Qutub-ud-Din." (6)

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Towards Rediscovering Shāh-e-Hamadān An Assessment of *'Kashmir Mayn Islāmī Inqilāb Aur Ḥaḍrat Shāh-e-Hamadān (RA)'*

Dr Mohammad Irfan Shah*

Of the multiple factors behind the emergence and development of Islam, Muslims, Islamic ethos and culture in Kashmir, (that covers a period of seven centuries or so), the role of Muslim Sufis and scholars (both indigenous and foreign) accrues an exceptional significance. With Sayyid 'Abdul Rah mān *alias* Bulbul Shah (RA)—the first recorded emigrant Sufi in Kashmir

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during 14th century –followed by Sayyid Muhammad Isfahāni *alias* Jānbāz Walī, Sayyid Ahmad Kirmānī, Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Bukhārī and others, the mystic valley–Kashmir began to witness the arrival of a long array of Sufis/scholars especially from Central Asia and Persia (14th century onwards). These emigrant Sufi/scholars, known for their expertise in Islamic religious/legal sciences (*'Ulūm al-Dīn*) and spiritual discipline (*Tasawwuf*), played a seminal role in propagating and sustaining the culture of Islamic values, learning and spirituality besides contributing variedly to the social, cultural, ethical, political and economic domains of the society. Such has been their impact that the religious, political and social history of medieval Kashmir would remain deficient without referring to their role and activities in the then Kashmiri society.

Among the leading medieval Sufis/scholars who significantly contributed in reshaping and moulding the society of Kashmir on Islamic religious and cultural pattern was **Mir Sayyid 'Alī of Hamadan** (Iran) *alias* **Shāh-e-Hamadān or Amīr-i Kabīr**, considered by the Kashmiri Muslims as an unrivalled benefactor of the valley. He along with his band of (hundreds of) disciples, associates and contemporary Sufis undoubtedly appear as an important reference in every attempt that tries to unveil the social, economic or religious history of



medieval Kashmir. Unsurprisingly, numerous attempts have been made at academic level, over the past decades, to unfold and understand the different aspects pertaining the life and activities of Shāh-e-Hamadān besides his magnanimous contributions to and impact on the society of medieval Kashmir. Exploring and explicating the diverse facets of such a religiously/spiritually and historically important figure (*Shah-i Hamadan*) is highly relatable in the current scenario for few reasons, like; Primarily, as a reference point, it invites the modern-day technocratic mind, that has been otherwise tied down with undue materialistic pursuits at the cost of ethical and spiritual standards—to explore its latent metaphysical and spiritual faculties for gaining an holistic understanding of the purpose of life and reaching to the Ultimate Reality and thus, to reconsider and revisit the worldview that has gained currency in the modern age. Secondly, it substantially adds to the modern-day academic pursuits of exploring the social, political and religious history of Kashmir with an inter-disciplinary approach, thereby paving ways for an easy understanding of the phenomenon of “spread of Islam in Kashmir.” Furthermore, such attempts of interpreting, re-interpreting or re-stating themes of the medieval/historical epoch with academic approach helps the modern-day researchers and



academics to resuscitate their connection with the intellectual, pedagogic, moral and spiritual legacy and derive possible solutions from them *vis-a-vis* the contemporary problems facing the humanity.

Keeping in view the relevance of this theme, the stature of Shāh-e-Hamadān and the significance of highlighting his multidimensional role in the medieval Kashmiri society, certain works of considerable academic credibility have seen the light of the day over the recent decades. Among these, the notable works include, *Shāh-e-Hamadān: Hayāt Aur Kārnamāy* (Srinagar:1935) by Prof. Shams al-Din Ahmad, *Sayyid Ali Hamadani* (Delhi:1987) by Sayyidah Ashraf Zafar, *Religious Thought of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani* (Delhi:1992) by Dr. Hayat Amir, *Mir Saiyid Ali Hamadani and Kubraviya Sufi Order in Kashmir* (New Delhi:2003) by Dr. Surayia Gull. With the same intent, Mir Imtiyaz Afreen, a promising writer and intellectual based in Kashmir, has recently brought out his Edited volume (in Urdu), [proceedings of the seminar “Shāh-e-Hamadān Hayāt Aur Khidmāt”, held on 24th March, 2019 in Budgam, Kashmir by Raza-E Mustafa Foundation] ***Kashmir Mayn Islāmī Inqilāb Aur Hadrat Shāh-e-Hamadān*** (*The Islamic Revolution in Kashmir and Hadrat Shah-i Hamadan*) [published by: Raza-E-Mustafa Foundation, Budgam, 2021, 370 pages]. This



voluminous title embraces a series of forty-three articles apart from some profound preliminary reflections—from accredited researchers, religious scholars, academicians and intellectuals—underscoring the different facets of the life, ideas, role, activities and message of Shah-i Hamadan. The work reflects an attempt to impart his (Shah-i Hamadan's) character a suitable standing with an all-embracing approach and proper contextualization on the broader canvas of Islamic (intellectual, cultural and religious) history in Kashmir.

The “Introduction”, by Dr Naushad Alam Chishti (Aligarh) – an expertly and succinct summary of the contents of the book –greatly helps a reader in estimating the subject matter comprising this title. The book receives approbation from some acclaimed academicians (including, Prof(s)–Sayyid 'Alīm Ashraf Jā'isī, Ghulām Rasūl Malik, Khwāja M. Akramuddin) and religious scholars (like, Mubārak Husayn Misbāhī and Zeeshān Ahmad Misbāhī) in the first section “Tathurāt/Expressions” that precedes the articles/content discussing the main theme. These erudites, in their precise pieces, have tried to elucidate and accentuate the rationale, relevance and significance behind producing academic writings on the multidimensional role and activities of Shāh-e-



Hamadān and the indelible impressions of his movement on the medieval society of Kashmir. Of these briefings that introduce the personality of Shāh-e-Hamadān and underscore the relevance of his teachings and activities in the current scenario, Prof. Ghulām Rasūl Malik and Mubārak Husayn Misbāhī's appraisals are worth consideration. The following section, "Awraq-i Hayāt (Memoir)", include biographical account (a brief chronological record of his important life events by Imtiyaz Afreen as Shāh-e-Hamadān Ba yak Nazar; Shah-i Hamadan: Sawānih Hayāt by Nazir Naqashbandi and Shah-i Hamadan: Hayāt Aur Khidmāt by Mufti 'Abdul Hamid Na'imī) of Shah-i Hamadan, based on the relevant historical sources and drafted in academic style, reflect genuine attempts of formulating the context for the subsequent discussions related to the ideas, activities and teachings of Shah-i Hamadan. Although, the content of these pieces, by major, is repetitive and follows the usual descriptive style, yet, serving as a timely "context" (for the study), imparts its placement a significant function in the text.

The subsequent section as "Afkār-o-Khayālat (Thoughts and Ideas)", a composition of twenty-three articles/papers, forms a substantial portion of the main discussion unfolding the multidimensional personality of Shāh-e-Hamadān in light of his ideas, contributions



and activities. The opening two piece in this section “Kashmir Mayn Islāmī Inqilāb Aur Shah-i Hamadan” and “Shāh-e-Hamadān 'Asr-i Hādir Kay Tanāzur Mayn” by M. I. Afreen (the editor) serve as an exhaustive introduction for this text. The author attempts at narrating (in light of some pertinent sources) the all-encompassing “Islamic revolution” brought about in Kashmir by Shāh-e-Hamadān with an emphasis on its impact on the religious, political, spiritual, moral, economic and cultural spheres of the society. Besides, the author augments this narration with a discussion on the multi-faceted personality of Shah-i Hamadan, his political ideas, his views on Ihsān or Tasawwuf (spiritual path), his contribution toward the Muslim unity and his impact on the local yet highly influential ascetic/spiritual strand, the Rīshiyya, of Kashmir. The following article, “ Rūhānī Inqilāb Kay Naqīb: Sayyid Mir 'Alī Hamadānī” by Prof Akhtarul Wās'I, although a repetitive narration, reflects a precise and an expertly presentation of Shah-i Hamadan's methodology of popularizing Islam in Kashmir especially his cordial approach toward the Salātīn, the Ruling elite. A meticulous and probably the first thematic discussion in the text “Iqbal Aur Shah-I Hamadan” by Prof G. R. Malik unfolds, in light of Iqbal's poem on Shāh-e-Hamadān in Jāved Nāmah, the impact of Shāh-e-Hamadān on Iqbal



as well as the resemblance of ideas/thoughts between them. Prof. Hayat Amir Husayni in his “Shāh-e-Hamadān Ka Tasawwur-i 'Ibādat”, has further embellished the section with an exhaustive, academic and explanatory discussion on the concept of worship/Ibādah in Islam and its elucidation as per Shah-i Hamadan. The content has been delivered in a thematic and philosophical tone and the author has attempted to demystify all the related aspects of the theme encompassing the discussion in thirty-four points with an extensive and studious elaboration. Two subsequent articles, “Shāh-e-Hamadān: Umarā' Aur 'Ulāma'-O-Sūfiyā' Kī Rahnuma'ī Wa Islāh” and “Shāh-e-Hamadān Ka Maslak-O-Mashrab” by Dr Abdul Quddus Khan considerably extend the ambit of the text. The first article, although with a substantial repetitive narration, brings to limelight the efforts of Shāh-e-Hamadān in reforming and rectifying the rulers, religious scholars and Sufis of his age. Khan's subsequent article, an industrious work, provides an analysis of Shah-i Hamadan's approach and standpoint with regard the different schools of jurisprudence as well as Sufi methodologies and ideologies. He has tried to underscore Shah-i Hamadan's emphasis on the universal character of Islam and his preference to work for the unity of Muslims than to spreading a specific



ideology or school. This write-up depicts him a broad-minded religious erudite with a moderate approach toward the diverse Islamic juridical or ideological schools as well as different Sufi ideologies or methodologies. Ghulam Hasan Husnu's article "Shāh-e-Hamadān Ka Safar-i Kashmir wa Baltistan", richly supplied with references, offers a finely articulated academic narration of Shah-i Hamadan's visits to Kashmir and different regions in Baltistan. Although, the subject matter, by major, is a reiterative narration, yet, a reader enjoys some crucial analyses and insights pertaining the strenuous religious preaching undertook by Shah-i Hamadan. The following write-up "Shāh-e-Hamadān Bahaythiyat-i Sayyāh-i 'Alam", by Khurshid Ahmad Qānūngo, presents a brief repetitious description (without proper referencing) of the travels of Shāh-e-Hamadān as a part of his mission of religious proselytization. Subsequently, in his, "Shah-i Hamadān Kī Bāzyāft", Dr M. Maroof Shah (a renowned Kashmiri intellectual) laments on the negligence of Kashmiri populace toward promulgating and understanding Shah-i Hamadan's thoughts, ideas and teachings with an holistic approach. For its expression, rather than producing a usual academic write-up, the author enumerates some grievances (for neglecting Shāh-e-Hamadān's message/ideas) and provides many viable



suggestions or propositions attempting to invite the attention of the intellectuals, academics, State-Officials and religious organizations toward revisiting and propagating Shah-Hamadan's works, ideas/thoughts, philosophy and teachings to sustain his legacy rather than merely displaying an emotional attachment with the name “Amīr-i Kabīr” or “Shah-i Hamadan”. Ghulam Rasul Dahlawi's “Shāh-e-Hamadān Aur Un Kī Madhhabī Fikr” (translated by the editor, M. I. Afreen), by major a brief and repetitive content emphasizes on revisiting the intellectual and mystic legacy of Shāh-e-Hamadān besides the relevance of Shah-i Hamadan's worldview in the contemporary era. Yaqub Muhammad Brāhowī's “Shāh-e-Hamadān Say Mansūb Āthār: Tahrīfat Aur Un Kay Athrāt”, reflects a critical and analytical treatment of the authenticity of some works on and ascribed to Shah-i Hamadan. His method and analyses in discrediting the ascription of Shāh-e-Hamadān with Shiism (Shia ideology) seems plausible with considerable academic credence. The subsequent five articles have been contributed by Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen (editor of the current work) and of these, in the first one “Shāh-e-Hamadān Kī Madhhabī Rawādārī ...” the author critically analyzes the allegations of religious intolerance levied on Shāh-e-Hamadān and concomitantly accentuates his tolerant, peaceful and



broadminded attitude in the multicultural and pluralistic society of medieval Kashmir. The author's argument, that it was Shah-i Hamadan's spiritual merit, sublime moral fibre and humane outlook that paved the ways of mass conversion for him, appears conclusive and credible. In his subsequent article, "Shāh-e-Hamadān Aur Nisāb-i Ta'līm", Aafreen attempts to look out for the pedagogical structure, curriculum and methodology promoted by Shāh-e-Hamadān in the medieval seminary educational setup. The author further in "Aql-o Shu'ūr Kī Māhiyat: Risālah-i 'Aqliya Kī Roshnī Mayn" discusses "the intellect", its form and other related aspects in light of Shah-i Hamadan's Risālah-i 'Aqliya. Go through these articles a reader can easily gauge Shah-i Hamadan's girth in the intellectual, religious, educational, spiritual and philosophical domains. Another brief write-up "Khānqāh-i Mu'allah: Kashmir Kā Thaḳāfatī Wa Ruhānī Markaz-o Mahwar", by AAafreen highlights Khānqāh-i Mu'allah as a centre with established historical, cultural and spiritual significance in Kashmir. Introducing a novel concept under discussion, in his "Dabistān-i Futūwat Aur Hadrat-i Shah-i Hamadan" Aafreen elucidates the concept of "Futūwat" (designating a sublime level of character and mystic quality), its understanding and practicality in Shah-i Hamadan's spiritual discipline in



light of his Risālah-i Futūwatiyah. “Ta’līmat-i Shah-i Hamadan: Mu’āsir ‘Ālamī Manzar Nāmāh Kī Roshnī Mayn” by Tanveer Hayat bringing under limelight the relevance of Shah-i Hamadan's thought and idea vis a vis the contemporary challenges facing the world, reflects a meticulous study although some opening statements of the author seem questionable (especially, undermining the role of Sufi missionaries prior to Shah-i Hamadan). The author mainly relies on his magnum opus *Zakhīratul Mulūk* to propose solutions to the contemporary challenges (like, unwarranted materialism, depression, violence, hatred and religious intolerance). His exploration of the concepts like global peace, human rights dialogue, and good governance in view of Shah-i Hamadan's thought and ideology is a timely and relevant academic investigation. Junefa Bilal describes Shah-i Hamadan's contribution to the medieval economic structure of Kashmir enumerating her efforts toward introducing and developing varied skills, arts and crafts in Kashmir (like Carpet and Shawl industries, stone, copper and silver works, paper mashie, calligraphy, embroidery and bookbinding). Though the article chiefly relies on the secondary and tertiary sources yet it provides an exhaustive panorama for understand Shah-i Hamadan's role “as a reviver of economy” in medieval Kashmir. Shah-i Hamadan's role



in establishing and sustaining the edifice of Islamic culture, learning and civilization in Kashmir forms the main content of M. Shafi Bhat's narrative, "Islāmī Tehzeeb Kay Farōg Mayn Shāh-e-Hamadān Kā Kirdār". However, lacking a deep and critical approach, major content of this article displays an introductory repetition of historical facts and the proposed or required information has been summed-up in a brief statement. With the same narrative style, M. Yaseen Kambay in a succinct write-up "Kashmir Aur Shah-i Hamadan" narrates the much-repeated account of the arrival of Shāh-e-Hamadān and his role in Kashmir besides praising the beauty of Kashmir's natural verdure as well as the mystic qualities and soulful character of the populace. Dr Sartaj A. Sofi's attempt to underscore the prevalence and spiritual/affective attachment of the Kashmiris with the Awrād-i Fathiyyah (of Shah-i Hamadan) in "Ahl-i Kashmir Kī Awrād-i Fathiyyah Kay Sāth Wābastigī" depicts a rhetorical approach (as adopted in most of the articles of the book), embellished with encomiums and historical accounts lacking any analytical treatment. The author's endeavour to authenticate the significance of Awrād as a spiritual panacea for the masses is rewarding. Lacking a proper methodology and bereft of a critical approach, Shahida Akhter's "Shāh-e-Hamadān Kay Siyāsī Afkār: Zakhīrat-



ul-Mulūk Kay Hawālay Say” reflects an exploration of the political ideas of Shāh-e-Hamadān in light of his Zakhīrat-ul-Mulūk with a repeated narrative style.

The following section “Adabiyat (Literary Contribution of Shah-i Hamadan)” constitutes eight articles reflecting an expertly and academic treatment of the literary contribution of Shah-i Hamadan. These writings invite the attention of intellectuals, academicians and researchers for a further meticulous study of the works of Shah-i Hamadan. Prof. Quddus Javed's “Shāh-e-Hamadān Ki Ghazal Ka Ta'miri Kirdar” depicts a fine literary endeavour to examine literary complexities and splendours in the poetry (Ghazals in his Chihal Asrār) of Shāh-e-Hamadān and Prof. Ghulam Rasul Malik's (Chihal Asrar: Ta'āruf wa Tajziyah) analytical survey of Chihal Asrār is equally interesting and appealing for the literati. Similarly, Prof. Hameed Nasim Rafiabadi's “Risālah-i Khawātiriyah” precise introduction of the subtle concepts of Risālah-i Khawātiriyah of Shāh-e-Hamadān and Dr Tanveer Hayat's description of some significant aspects of the Maktūbāt-i Amīriya (letters of Shah-i Hamadan) in “Maktūbāt-i Shāh-e-Hamadān Kay Kuch Numāyān Pehlū” furnish novel insights to the readers. In particular, his refutation of the recently launched propaganda of ascribing the Maktūbāt of Shāh-e-



Hamadān with Shaykh Yahyā Manerī is appreciable. Mufti Ibrahim Misbahi's critical and analytical study of *Zakhirat-ul-Mulūk* (in “*Zakhirat-ul-Mulūk: Tahqīqī wa Tajziyātī Mutāla'a*”) and Fayaz Ahmad Yatoo's introduction of “*Risālah-i Hifzān: Ek Mutala'a*” supply essential findings with regards the thought and ideology of Shah-i Hamadan. “*Awrad-i Fathiyyah: Mukhtasar Ta'aruf*” by Dr Zulfiqar Siddiqi and Mir Imtiyaz Aafreen's “*Awrad-i Fathiyyah: Wazīfah-i Tawhīd*” represent scholarly attempts at introducing and emphasizing on the subtle, spiritual and doctrinal significance of the hymns of this invaluable gift from Shāh-e-Hamadān for the Kashmiris.

Finally, nine short and succinct statements in “*Paighāmāt (Messages/Teachings)*” by renowned religious scholars and intellectuals emphasizing on the role, contribution, erudition and spirituality of Shāh-e-Hamadān besides his impact and favours made on Kashmiri society, culminate this timely and studious volume on the benefactor of Kashmir, Shah-i Hamadan. An overall assessment reveals that the work is a valuable academic contribution to the study of the personality, role and contribution of Shāh-e-Hamadān to medieval Kashmir. Although many articles display a usual, non-academic and rhetorical approach, yet some articles accrue considerable academic credence embellished



with proper critical and analytical methodology supplying profound insights pertaining the themes under study. The book is highly recommended for academicians, intellectuals, religious scholars, researchers, students and partially to general readers and delivers highly relevant and interesting stuff to be studied and reflected upon.



Raza-E-Mustafa Foundation

Kanir Chadoora Budgam J&K India

An Introduction

Raza-E-Mustafa Foundation is a non-political, non-sectarian and non-profitable public welfare organisation which has a long-term strategic vision to promote social reform, moral education, social justice and spiritual wellbeing. Its emphasis is on improving the social and moral condition of the people in general, enlightening the masses with the knowledge of their rights and duties and presenting a realistic, scientific, spiritual and pacific picture of Islam. It also emphasises the eradication of various social evils like corruption, exploitation, ignorance, drug addiction, alcoholism,



child marriages, the dowry system, moral degradation and environmental degradation. The Foundation believes in striving for the promotion of local art and culture and raises awareness among the people regarding the spiritual and cultural ethos of Kashmir.

Foundation

The Foundation was established in 2006 under the guidance of some notable personalities for the promotion of Sufi thought in the society. The approach of working has been educational and reformatory, keeping in view the holistic development of the society.

Focus:

Spiritual learning, public welfare, educational reform, cultural awareness, and mutual co-existence.

Members:

The Foundation has a significant number of members in the form of volunteers from different sections of the society.

Method of working:

The Foundation works on the behest of its dedicated members and volunteers who organise various activities for the achievement of its goals. They not only

participate in its activities but provide financial support as well.

Aims and objectives:

The Foundation aims at bringing about a progressive reformation in the society. The Foundation aims at the prosperity of all, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. It takes inspiration from the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who says,

“All creatures are [like] a family of God: and He loves most those who are kindest to His family.” The same idea is carried forward by 'vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' from the Upanishads which translates as, “The World is One Family.”

Ideology:

The Foundation derives its ideology from the spiritual tradition of Islam, often referred to as Tasawwuf or Ehsan. The Foundation firmly believes in spiritual and social well-being of community and adopts a democratic and constitutional approach for all its activities.

Achievements:

The Foundation has successfully established the following endeavors for general welfare of the people:



- **Al Hidayah Islamic Centre** at Kanir Budgam: It comprises of a Quranic seminary (Darasgah), Shah-e-Hamadan Research Centre and a Reading Room.
- **Sheikh-ul-Aalam Memorial Library:** It contains dozens of books on different subjects like Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, History, Literature, Biography etc.
- **Markazi Islami Bait-ul-Maal:** Under this initiative Islamic Charity in the form of Zakat and Sadaqat are collected to be disbursed among the poor and destitute.
- **RMF Publications:** Four books have been published so far from this platform, *Kitab-ul-Zakat*, *Rehnuma-e-Haj-o-Umrah*, *Kashmir Mein Islami Inquilab Aur Hazrat Shah Hamadan* and *The Apostle of Islam in Kashmir*.
- **Shoba-e-Dawat-o-Tabligh:** Under this banner different religious and socio-cultural activities are organized like Awareness Programmes, Public Outreach Programmes, Conferences, Annual Milad-un-Nabi Conference, debates, seminars, Haj Training Sessions, Scholarship Programmes, Quiz Contests and Guidance and Counselling Sessions etc.



Request

If you agree with our aims and objectives, you may also become a member of Raza-e-Mustafa Foundation by contacting us. It is a wonderful platform for contributing to the society by your abilities. Feel free to contact us.

RAZA-E-MUSTAFA FOUNDATION (RMF)

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